

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, April 18, 2002**

**1:30 p.m.**

Date: 02/04/18

[The Speaker in the chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Welcome.

Almighty God, we give thanks for the lives of Your faithful servants who defend the freedoms and values that are a true expression of Your divine intent. We humbly ask Your blessing and grace upon the soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry who were killed and wounded in the service of their sovereign and country in Afghanistan. We pray for the families, the friends, and fellow soldiers of those who have died as they mourn their loss and ask that You give to the wounded the will and spirit to sustain their recovery. In a moment of silence we remember them.

May they rest eternal, O Lord. Amen.

Please be seated.

Hon. members, there has been some consultation among the three caucuses represented in the Assembly, and because of the very tragic circumstances of yesterday it's my understanding that the leader of the government, a representative of the Official Opposition, and the leader of the third party would like to make some comments with respect to this tragic event. In order to do that, we have to alter the Routine, and we would need unanimous consent from the members to proceed in that manner. So I'm going to ask the question. Might we have unanimous consent to proceed?

[Unanimous consent granted]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, thank you so very, very much for your thoughtful prayer.

It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to express the government of Alberta's deep sorrow at the deaths of four Canadian soldiers who were struck down yesterday in Afghanistan. This terrible event touches every Albertan and Canadian with a great deal of sadness. While the loss of life is always regrettable, it is all the more tragic when it occurs in the service of others and in the defence of one's country. Those lost and the many others who were wounded are all in our hearts today, as are their families. To those at Edmonton garrison and in the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battle Group, to the friends and neighbours of those lost and wounded, and to their families I extend on behalf of all Albertans deepest condolences.

The members of Canada's armed forces have always distinguished themselves with honour, courage, and bravery. They have always been willing to face great danger to defend this country, its people, and its cherished values of freedom, democracy, and peace. Heartbreaking events like this truly bring home the horrors of war and remind us all of the risks our armed personnel face whenever they go into battle. They remind us of the heavy price we pay for safety and security. Most importantly, events like this remind us of the value of human life.

In the rotunda of this Legislature there are plaques that commemorate the proud and timeless names of Albertans who fell in the great wars of the last century. Those names remind all of us who visit the Legislature that when the solemn call to arms comes, Albertans have always responded with courage and firmness. Today we mourn four more soldiers who showed the same courage as the forebears and

who answered a call to arms that is just as noble, just as necessary as the battles that claimed those who came before them. These four brave soldiers are the first Canadian military casualties of the war against terrorism. We pray that they will be the last, but we know that we cannot be certain that they will be. Whatever happens, all Albertans know in their hearts that the debt we owe to those fallen and wounded soldiers and their families is immeasurable. We can begin to pay that debt by honouring them and their spirits from this day forward.

Today we pay tribute to Sergeant Marc Leger, Corporal Ainsworth Dyer, Private Richard Green, and Private Nathan Smith. May they rest in peace.

We also pay tribute to the eight wounded soldiers: Sergeant Lorne Ford, Corporal Rene Paquet, Master Corporal Curtis Hollister, Corporal Brett Perry, Private Norman Link, Corporal Shane Brennan, Master Corporal Stanley Clark, and Corporal Brian Decaire. May they recover and be home soon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with profound sadness that I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to offer my condolences to the families and friends of our Canadian soldiers who have been killed or wounded. Members of the Canadian forces and their families recognize the risks involved in the defence of our country and our freedoms. Nevertheless, such a loss is always a shock, and family, friends, and the nation feel the loss of these soldiers. The loss of these young Canadians in the service of their country should serve as a reminder to us all that the members of the Canadian forces safeguard the freedoms we cherish. We are indeed fortunate to have men and women prepared to set aside their own fears and concerns on behalf of the country. Their bravery and commitment and willingness to face danger should be a model for us all.

Mr. Speaker, the brave service of members of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry dates back almost a century, to 1914. To the members of this regiment we also extend our condolences for their loss. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. Last night four Canadian soldiers, members of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry on duty in Afghanistan, were killed. Eight others were injured. I echo the Prime Minister of Canada when I say that mere words of sympathy are small solace. As Canadians, as Albertans we are united in our grief as our tears fall together with those of the families of these soldiers. For their families there is on this Earth no fair exchange for the grief, confusion, and disbelief they are experiencing this morning and in the long, difficult time ahead. This tragedy will sadden and burden our hearts for many days to come.

I join my colleagues today in this Legislature in offering our condolences to the families of our departed friends. We owe much to those who serve. We owe them honour, and we owe them remembrance. The sting of these deaths will remain in our hearts and minds and memories. In the dreams they nurtured, they will still shape our future. While this unexpected tragedy will sadden and burden Canadian hearts for many days and months to come, may peace soon replace the heartache.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**head: Introduction of Guests**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BOUTILIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce young Canadians and young Albertans who visit annually the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Joining us here today are grades 5 and 6 students, parents, and staff from l'école Dickinsfield in the city of Fort McMurray in the public school system. I'd like all of them to rise now and receive the very warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

1:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

MR. HANCOCK: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you today and through you to members of this Assembly employees from the Alberta Justice Court of Appeal service. These individuals are here on the public service orientation tour, which, I understand, is being promoted and carried out by the Legislative Assembly Office and your good offices. I'd ask Mr. Randy Steele, Mrs. Beth Millard, Ms Monica Cassidy, Mrs. Ruby Theroux, Ms Charlene Colpitts, Ms Alice Barnsley, Mrs. Danielle Umrysh, Mrs. Toni Wilson, Ms Diane Boisvert, Ms Rosemary Evans, and Ms Corinne Renaud-Gagnier to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House and our sincere thank you for the good work that they do on our behalf and on behalf of all Albertans.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MASKELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Legislature Mrs. Xiao Na Xiao, a former champion triathlete and star of the Chinese national track and field team and now a resident of Alberta. She's the founder of Li Man International Trading Ltd., an Alberta-based company focusing on import and export between Canada and China. One of the major projects of her company is to introduce Alberta advanced environmental protection technology to China. She's leaving for China tomorrow representing some of Alberta's engineering consultant companies such as Lockerbie, Stantec, Jacques Whitford, and the ISL to Chinese environmental protection projects. She's accompanied today by Diana Wong and Benson Chiu, who are her assistants. Would my guests please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

MS EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan I'm pleased to introduce a couple who last year received the century farm family award and this fall will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary. Their son-in-law is the Member of Parliament for Lakeland. Their daughter, Joan, is with Chamber security, so they're well versed in Legislature matters. I'd ask that Norman and Lydia Gabert do rise, please, in the public gallery so that we can all provide our traditional warm welcome to them in this Assembly.

**head: Oral Question Period**

THE SPEAKER: First Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

**Ultrasound Technicians**

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ultrasound technicians are

vital to a modern health care system, performing ultrasounds for diagnosis and treatment in areas such as cardiology, obstetrics, gynecology, and internal medicine. Today one of Calgary's major hospitals, the Rockyview, is on the brink of crisis because so many of its ultrasound technicians have been hired away to for-profit diagnostic centres. As a result, Calgarians may face serious problems in getting health care even as health care spending climbs. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: how does the minister expect the Rockyview to continue as a full-service hospital with such a profound shortage of ultrasound technicians?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with many different issues in health care, and we have placed a great deal of emphasis on the people inputs that go into our health care system. Throughout this province we do have dedicated professionals, and of course it's not just physicians or nurses. It's also ultrasound technicians and technologists, people who work in laboratories, and so on. Ultimately, we have done a great deal to recruit people from other jurisdictions. That, of course, is a short-term solution. In the medium and longer term we have spent significant numbers of dollars in training more people, and I'm not talking about just these technicians but throughout health care professions. To the best of my recollection, sir, about three years ago we trained about 3,700 people in our health care professions per year. Last year it was over 5,000. So we are making significant investments in three different areas: in capital, in people, and in equipment.

Mr. Speaker, of course an important role should be recognized for the private facilities that are providing diagnostic services. Those services can by contract still be provided to the public system of course. So we will have to strike the right balance between getting services that are done in public facilities but in private facilities as well, sir.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that ultrasound technicians at the Rockyview and other Alberta hospitals are being poached by for-profit diagnostic businesses with large signing bonuses, pay hikes, promises of no shift work, and easier patients, what is the minister prepared to do to prevent public-sector ultrasound technicians from being lured away by for-profit businesses?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, regional health authorities are working on health workforce issues, and of course the issues with respect to a specific regional health authority will be dealt with by that particular regional health authority. Ultimately the solution may be that a regional health authority could decide to contract with a private facility to provide the same services, and if there is a way of providing that service or that procedure through a dedicated facility that provides diagnostic services, that might ultimately lead to efficiency in the system.

DR. TAFT: At a higher cost, I would say.

Will the minister finally admit that this government's experiments with for-profit health care are creating far more problems than they solve?

MR. MAR: No, Mr. Speaker. In fact, our plan is to move forward on improving health care. I think it would be fair to say that Albertans feel very strongly about the quality of their health care system. There are some legitimate issues with respect to access, and it is our goal to maintain quality and improve access in our public health care system. That is the endgame, sir.

THE SPEAKER: Second Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

### **For-profit Health Care**

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government for years has denied the evidence that increasing the role of for-profit medicine will weaken the public health care system, this despite research that shows that the larger the role of for-profit health care, the higher the cost to the taxpayer. Today we see yet another example of why Alberta's health care system should remain public and why Albertans are paying more and more for less and less health care. To the Premier: will the Premier admit that the signing bonuses and higher wages offered to ultrasound technicians in for-profit clinics are going to inevitably drive up wage costs in the public system?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I take great exception to the hon. member's statements that this is for profit. If there is a medically required procedure, whether it's an X ray, a CAT scan, an ultrasound, an MRI, or any other procedure that is prescribed, it is provided to the patient under the publicly funded health care system. So this kind of rhetoric, the kind that we heard during Bill 11, is unnecessary, to say the least. It is misleading, to say the least. It is this kind of misinformation and misrepresentation of the facts that does the Liberal Party such disservice, and that's why they only have seven members.

DR. TAFT: Again to the Premier: why are regional health authorities subsidizing for-profit clinics by going out of province and even out of country to recruit ultrasound technicians only to have them hired away by for-profit businesses?

MR. KLEIN: Recruiting has been going on for years and years and years. It will go on long after we're gone. All I know is that we have in this province under the publicly funded system among the highest if not the highest paid physicians in all categories in the country, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that the clinics that provide various diagnostic services under the publicly funded system do a commendable job, an absolutely wonderful job. I know that when I had pneumonia, I was in and I was out and it was very expedient. You know, I didn't have to go to emergency at a hospital and tie up the equipment there. I went to the clinic, got it done in, I would say, 15 minutes. I was in and I was out. It was done with a great deal of dispatch, a great deal of efficiency, and, I might add, with a great deal of professionalism.

1:50

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier finally admit that one reason for the climbing costs of Alberta's health care system is its growing experiment with for-profit health care?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, again it is absolutely wrong – wrong – for the hon. member to stand up and talk about “for-profit.” Bill 11, the Health Care Protection Act, clearly states as its preamble and as a matter of law, which is paramount, paramount in this province, paramount in this country, that we will abide by all the principles of the Canada Health Act. Only he, this hon. member, seems to be unable to get it through his head.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, if I may supplement, sir. Under the Health Care Protection Act there are some 34 contracts that have been

approved for private providers to provide services to the public system. In aggregate the contracts total approximately \$10 million out of what will now be a \$6.8 billion budget, somewhat less than one-fifth of 1 percent of the overall budget. The balance is spent on public health care.

THE SPEAKER: Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

### **Health Resource Centre**

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Health Resource Centre, a business backed by major multinational investors, submitted a proposal to the Minister of Health and Wellness for approval to perform major overnight surgeries in Calgary. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: given the notable shortages of surgeons, anesthetists, nurses, and various medical technicians in Alberta's public health care facilities, will the minister prohibit HRC from recruiting staff from public facilities?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should first make himself familiar with the provisions of the Health Care Protection Act. In it it clearly states that major surgeries are to be done in public hospitals. It is not incumbent upon the government to decide what is major and what is minor. It is incumbent upon the College of Physicians and Surgeons to decide. We don't have as a government the ability to determine those major procedures which should be done in a public hospital. Accordingly, the college has approved and accredited this particular facility to perform certain types of surgical procedures. They have submitted a proposal as of yesterday's date to the Department of Health and Wellness to provide uninsured surgical services.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. members and Albertans should know that under the Canada Health Act there are certain exceptions to the Canada Health Act. Uninsured services would be paid for, for example, by the Workers' Compensation Board, the armed forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, other provinces, the federal government, and out-of-country residents. So there are sufficient protections in the approval process to ensure that there will not be harm to the public health care system. That has to be the primary responsibility of the Department of Health and Wellness and the Minister of Health and Wellness, to be satisfied that the approval of such a facility to provide uninsured services will not impair the public system.

MR. BONNER: To the same minister: if the minister refuses to prohibit HRC from recruiting staff from public facilities, isn't he then confirming that HRC's application will lengthen waiting lists by worsening staff shortages in the public system?

MR. MAR: I believe that I was perfectly clear, in answering the hon. member's first question, that the paramount concern from the perspective of the Minister of Health and Wellness has to be to be assured that the approval of such a facility by the Department of Health and Wellness will not impair the public health care system. Mr. Speaker, the criteria that will be applied will include the notion that there can be no negative impact to the public health system, that the facility will in fact serve the public interest either in terms of improving access or maintaining quality, and that it will not – it will not – breach the spirit and the provisions set out in the Canada Health Act. Further, I'll need to be satisfied that no conflict of interest exists.

MR. BONNER: To the same minister, Mr. Speaker: given that HRC will be using staff recruited from Alberta's public system to serve out-of-province patients, how can the minister claim that HRC is a benefit to Alberta's health care system?

MR. MAR: Well, indeed, there are many people from out of province that receive services here in this province, and they are both in the public and in the private system, Mr. Speaker. As an example, I'm advised by the people who run the Cross Cancer Institute here in the city of Edmonton that some 50 people a week come for cancer treatment from the province of Saskatchewan. I don't think that there's anything wrong with that. Indeed, I would like the hon. member to stand up and say, "Because you're from Saskatchewan, we won't provide you with this very important service."

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week, as the Minister of Health and Wellness has indicated, he received an application from a company that wants to do total joint replacements and other major back surgeries in its private Calgary hospital. The minister has set up a secretive approval process on such applications, where the decisions get made behind closed government doors while other health care providers and the public get frozen out. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Given the precedent-setting nature of this application, will the minister do the right thing and make public the details of this application before he makes any moves to approve it?

MR. MAR: I believe that a great deal has been disclosed about this application already. It has also gone through a process with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Mr. Speaker. The College of Physicians and Surgeons has been transparent in their process in determining that this facility can be accredited for the provision of certain types of services, which include knee and hip replacements. It is always the intention of the government to be perfectly transparent about this. That is my expectation for the future as well.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the minister is committed to transparency, will he explain or state whether he plans to do any public consultation before approving this precedent-setting application for a private, inpatient, nonhospital hospital, or will the entire approval process take place behind closed doors?

MR. MAR: Well, I first of all want to respond to the hon. member's characterization of this facility as a hospital. He should refer, Mr. Speaker, to the Health Care Protection Act, which specifically says that hospitals are within the public domain and not within the private domain. So can there be private surgical facilities that provide services that are uninsured? Is the hon. member here to say that uninsured services should not be provided at all? I don't think that makes any sense. Keep in mind that this application is not about providing publicly insured services; it is about uninsured services. I don't think that the hon. member wants to stand here in this House and say that he'll stand between somebody who has a particular need and somebody who can provide service that will alleviate a person's pain. Will he stand here in this House and say that he'll stand in between that? I think that this is not within the views of Albertans who say: we have needs, and we want those needs satisfied.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

2:00

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans have another concern. Will the minister assure this House that he will not approve an application from HRG, now Network Health, or any other corporation wanting to open a private, for-profit, nonhospital hospital that has any level of foreign ownership, since this could expose Alberta's health care system to NAFTA challenges?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I have to stand here and say that I've made clear how this will be approved or not approved. This facility will not be approved if it harms the public system, but the converse is that if it can improve our system, improve access, and does not take away from the public system, then it will be approved. I will take the time to very carefully evaluate this particular application. He appears to have made a ruling on it without even having considered what the terms of the application are. I think that's what people can expect from this hon. member.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

### Budget Surplus

MS DeLONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been a lot of discussions in the media lately regarding the province's projected surplus for 2001-2002. One report indicated that the economic cushion could be as high as \$500 million. My questions are to the Minister of Finance. Can the minister confirm what our surplus for the last fiscal year will actually be?

MRS. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I cannot confirm what the operating cash flow surplus will be for last year at this point as we're only 18 days into this fiscal year, and as such the accounting for the last fiscal year has not been completed not only by departments but by agencies of the Crown. In addition to that, we need to have all of the revenue that would come through March 31 come in and be accounted for, and that would come probably within 30 to 45 days or even up to 60 days, so we won't have that number for a while. Naturally, we have to verify the numbers before we can give the final fiscal picture for last year, and that will take some time.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MS DeLONG: Thank you. The Department of Infrastructure budget for the year in question was \$2.8 billion, and they actually spent \$2.2 billion, a difference of unspent money of about \$600 million. Is this surplus money actually budget surplus?

MRS. NELSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll have to take members back to last year when we brought the budget forward for the fiscal year 2001-2002. We booked what we call an economic cushion of just over \$800 million to accommodate the fluctuations, et cetera, throughout the year as we saw there were changes in the economy, and that cushion did erode downward. We are ending the year, so we had forecast that we would have over \$800 million. We know with the updates that we put through from the first quarter, the second quarter, and the third quarter that there were massive changes predominantly on our cash flow from our natural resource area and our investment income that brought our revenue picture down. As such, we don't expect that we will be able to fulfill an \$800 million cushion. It will be substantially less, so there are not really addi-

tional dollars, although we are going to be in a positive position. That's what we do in this province. We do not run deficits. We run positive positions on our cash flow statements.

The question on where we pulled back on our spending, as you know, was in the Infrastructure and Transportation areas mainly last fall when we found out that our revenue picture was down by over \$1.5 billion. So we deferred and delayed a number of projects in the two departments of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, and we were able to put some dollars back into the existing budget framework to release those dollars that we had held up in the fall.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MS DeLONG: That's fine. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by the hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

### Debt Repayment Legislation

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has set aside every other priority of Albertans for the sake of its signature law of debt repayment. As we've seen, municipalities are not happy with this, charities and community groups are not happy with this, parents and schoolchildren are not happy with this, and now not even some of the government's own ministers are happy with this, as they are beginning to voice the concerns of their constituents. My first question is to the Minister of Seniors. How did the government's law to put 75 percent of any budget surpluses towards the debt contribute to a successful seniors' housing program being drastically reduced?

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Well, Mr. Speaker, to begin with, the very successful seniors' housing program has not been reduced. We've gone through the onetime funding that was allocated. We've retained I believe it is a million dollars for contingencies this year, and as we assess the ongoing needs and the ongoing successes, we'll ensure that this seniors' housing meets the need as prescribed in things like the Broda report and the impact on aging. To try to relate the two is fishing for the stars in daylight.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, in response to that, I'll table the statement from program 3.4.1 in the Seniors' budget that states that it is.

My next question is to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. Will the minister lobby the cabinet to acknowledge that debt repayment law fails to provide sufficient flexibility for his department and the government in general?

MR. CARDINAL: No.

MS CARLSON: My last question is to the Premier. Will the Premier listen to ministers and constituents, or will he continue to ignore them and pursue his own plan for a retirement party?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's evident by the size of this government's majority that we did listen to Albertans. Going back as far as 1993, Albertans told us that never again do they want this government or any government to spend more than it earns, number one. They wanted us to balance the budget. Going back to that period of time, the debt had accumulated to astronomical figures, and Albertans said to the government: "We want you to reduce the debt. We don't want massive amounts of money going to pay off

debt. We want that money to go to services. We want that money to buy things that benefit Albertans. We don't want it to go to the banks and other financial institutions, where it only serves to enhance the corporate profile of the financial institution. We want it to stay here in Alberta." That's why we brought in a law that dedicates 75 percent of all surplus to pay-down of debt so we keep reducing the amount of interest, the hundreds of millions of dollars that would otherwise go to financial institutions that we're now able to put into services. It's as simple as that, so simple even the Liberals should be able to figure it out.

THE SPEAKER: To the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, the appropriate time for tablings will come a little later in the Routine.

The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

### Drought Assistance

MR. JACOBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year Alberta farmers suffered through a devastating drought, and the continuing dry conditions in many parts of southern Alberta are not offering any hope of improvement this year. This week Cypress county authorities declared a drought disaster for their area, and according to news reports several other farm groups are also calling on both the federal and provincial governments for aid to alleviate the drought conditions they are facing. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Can the minister tell us what this government is doing to help Alberta farmers deal with these drought conditions?

2:10

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, Cypress county's declaration of drought disaster certainly alerts all of us to the fact that there is still a problem. Certainly we welcome the snowfall we've had in some of the northern parts of the province, including this area, because members would recall that at this time last year this whole area, in fact the majority of the province, was suffering the worst precipitation levels in 130 years. Today in this area we're seeing dugouts filling and hopefully good spring moisture. Because of the concerns we did extend the farm water program. We listened very carefully to producers and groups and municipal councils in our various areas and extended that program. We extended provincewide a pasture program and of course the 4-H production program. Repetitive droughts in the past years have clearly identified to us that we must continue to be vigilant and responsive, and we will do that.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. JACOBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: will there be any other programs to help farmers should a 2002 drought occur?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in the House a number of times about an Alberta drought risk management plan that was being put together through co-operation with Alberta Environment, PFRA, and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. This plan will certainly improve our ability to monitor drought conditions and to respond in a timely manner. We intend to proceed with that plan this year. We along with the federal government – and we appreciate their support in this – have added several additional weather monitoring stations which will help us identify areas.

Mr. Speaker, one of the important reasons, I believe, that Cypress county has identified this early a drought disaster in their area is a

tax deferral program that the federal government does implement. However, the process for that is that the county or the municipality must first identify their area as a disaster, then in about July the provincial government will approach the federal government to either extend the tax deferral – which is this instance, because this would be the third year in that area – which is in place so that we don't lose those herds permanently. When people have to deplete their herds because of lack of moisture or lack of pasture, we want them to be able to restock. So it is important that municipalities do react in a timely fashion so we can address that.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. JACOBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the same minister. I've heard some farmers saying that the only thing that will help them this year is immediate financial aid. Is the minister considering a drought assistance program like the one that was offered last year?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it would be very unusual to consider a drought in April because we've seen over the last weekend and into this week how quickly circumstances can change. However, we do know that in some regions of the province, it will take more than one year to recover from those conditions; hence, the pasture insurance program, the forage insurance program, the crop insurance program, that we were able to make some enhancements to this year, and the water program, which is probably one of the best programs we have. We'll continue to monitor the situation, as this government has consistently, and we'll continue to support our farmers in their times of stress in the best way we have available to us.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

### Education System Review

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 12 mandates an examination of the learning system in Alberta. Class size, the adequacy of student grants, resources for special-needs children, and technology greening are but some of the issues that led to the strikes in our schools and need to be addressed. My question is to the Minister of Learning. Who will be doing the examination?

DR. OBERG: Mr. Speaker, there will be a panel of independent individuals that will be doing it. The final choice on these individuals has not been made yet.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: will the minister assure parents that the parents will have an opportunity to have their voices heard in front of that panel?

DR. OBERG: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

### Film Development Program

MR. LORD: Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Calgary-Currie has the great pleasure of serving as one of the major centres of activity for the film industry in Alberta, with the head offices and in many cases

the only offices of many small film companies being located on the old Currie barracks lands and buildings, and we are happy to have them. I often hear from constituents about some of the notable success stories in the movie business and also the many opportunities lost. The industry itself has not only generated a great deal, even a disproportionate amount, of economic development within Alberta but has in fact helped advertise Alberta and Canada all around the world, much to the delight and benefit of all of us. Now, the Alberta film development program has provided advice and has helped generate stability in this very difficult industry over the past three years, and I have some questions for the Minister of Community Development in this regard. Mr. Minister, given that the first three-year phase of the Alberta film development program recently concluded, can the minister explain how and whether or not that program benefited our province?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, indeed, the member is quite correct. The Alberta film development program in its first three years of operation since being established in 1999 in fact has provided some tremendous benefits on many fronts for Albertans and particularly for the cultural industry of filmmaking.

I should say that the most eminent feature of the program's success is the fact that we were able to resurrect the infrastructure, the crews as they were, for this highly mobile and somewhat fragile industry. I should say secondly that we were able to increase the participation by about 37 percent with respect to film-related personnel. In the process we've also been able to attract more films and more high-profile films to our province. We've received numerous national and international recognitions as a result, which is good for our province and, indeed, for the whole country.

We've also had tremendous economic benefits that have come to our province as a result of this highly successful program. In fact, Mr. Speaker, for the year ended '00-01, we saw something in the neighbourhood of \$68 million of economic return for an investment in artistic film development of only \$5 million.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. LORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: what plans or changes does the minister have for the Alberta film development program, looking into the future?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, I think one of the most important things for the future is to see how we can best help sustain this film development program and maintain it. That is why in the current budget you will see a commitment from me and from this government to see that important film development program continue into the out-years beyond the current year's budget.

Secondly, in relation to working with the very important industry association, AMPIA, the Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association, in tandem with them we're going to talk a little bit more about how we can further the artistic development and smooth some things out that would help make the business of filmmaking in this province even more attractive to others, which will help with the artistic development that the program pledges to do. I think that in the future you can see increased participation on behalf of filmmakers and also on behalf of some of our government personnel working there in attending some of the higher profile national and international events such as the Cannes Film Festival, which is coming up very soon, so that more and more people know about the beauties

and wonders of our province in terms of how nice a place it is to do business and make films.

So we'll do everything we can to attract more filmmaking opportunities, I can assure you.

MR. LORD: Again to the same minister: given that the industry is fragile and fraught with challenges, what specific actions could the minister consider to ensure that Alberta's filming environment remains strong and competitive?

2:20

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I should tell you that I've had numerous meetings with our colleague from Airdrie-Rocky View with respect to this issue, because it is an issue that she has championed and is well known for in our caucus, along with our Deputy Premier and numerous others. In response to some suggestions made by those hon. members and others as well as having met with numerous representatives from the filmmaking community, AMPA representatives, their president and executive and so on, I will be meeting soon with representatives from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and talking to them about some plans that I have that will help this industry a great deal. I'll just give you a couple of them really quickly. First of all, I am prepared to look at increasing the cap from \$500,000 upwards from there. I'm also prepared to eliminate the eligibility requirement of 10 percent of total expenses and make it something more in the line of 20 percent of Alberta expenditures as being the eligible amount. I'm prepared to increase the funding to dramatic series, which provide a lot of benefit to this province. There will be other good-news items. I know that . . .

THE SPEAKER: Sounds like a fine ministerial statement coming up.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

### Community Lottery Boards

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 4, 2001, the city of Edmonton received notice from the Edmonton Community Lottery Board that a grant of \$300,000 had been awarded in support of the redevelopment of the Kenilworth arena in the constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar. Now, on December 10, 2001, the city of Edmonton subsequently received a second letter delaying that money until April of this year, but Alberta Gaming stated that they "will issue your cheque in April 2002." My first question is to the Premier this afternoon. Why did you break away from the \$300,000 agreement with the city of Edmonton to improve the Kenilworth arena not only for minor hockey players but for figure skaters and adult recreational use?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as I understand the question, this was a decision of the community lottery board, to grant \$300,000 to this particular arena project. We had absolutely no say over the operation of the community lottery board other than to provide them with the money. I know that under the rules of CFEP it would have had to have come from a number of different constituencies, probably, for that kind of money, but the rules might have been different for the CLB. I'll have the hon. Minister of Gaming respond in further detail relative to the specifics of this project.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The community lottery boards deal with many applications and certainly did in the year

2001-2002. I personally am not familiar with each and every application that comes forward; it's an administrative matter. If cheques were in fact written, there would be a record of that. What I can do for the hon. member relative to this particular application is look into it, and I'm happy to do that and provide further information to this hon. member with respect to that.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. For the record, I appreciate the Minister of Gaming's diligence. However, my next question is for the Premier. How many tax dollars is the government planning to spend to defend these cutbacks in court, because Alberta Gaming not only made commitments in Kenilworth through the community lottery boards but elsewhere in the province, and these commitments are not being honoured. These existing agreements have not been honoured to provide funding to community groups.

Thank you.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll have the hon. Minister of Gaming respond because I'm not sure how agreements through Alberta Gaming with community lottery boards pertain or relate in any way, shape, or form to the funding of individual projects. I'll have the hon. minister respond.

MR. STEVENS: It's quite correct that on an annual basis the Ministry of Gaming enters into individual agreements with individual lottery boards. For the year 2001-2002 there were 88 boards, and there would have been 88 agreements relative to that. The funding would flow out of the Alberta lottery fund into Gaming and from Gaming into the various lottery boards, and there was a process that each board set up for the allocation of funds. Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any detail relative to the questions being posed by this hon. member.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Premier: given that this government has broken faith with Albertans over the community lottery boards, how can the city of Edmonton properly plan and manage this project and its imminent construction when this government without warning takes away the funding?

Thank you.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, you know, without warning we introduced the community lottery board program, and for years and years and years municipalities existed without community lottery boards. For years; isn't that right? For years they existed without community lottery boards, and we brought them in without warning. They were taken out so we could reallocate resources to the things that are deemed to be the priorities of Albertans, like health and education and infrastructure. Those things seem to be of no importance to the Liberals, because they are obsessed with community lottery boards to the detriment of those things that Albertans have told us are priorities for them like health, like education, like infrastructure, like safe communities, like meaningful research in science and technology, like protection of the environment. Those are the things that Albertans have told us are important to them.

Mr. Speaker, again I stress that these things are obviously of no importance whatsoever to the Liberals, because they are obsessed and all they can talk about are community lottery boards.

THE SPEAKER: Well, hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, you've been rather vociferous this afternoon. Now it's your turn.

### Chronic Wasting Disease

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One month ago the first known case of chronic wasting disease, a relative of mad cow disease, was discovered in a slaughtered elk from an Alberta game ranch. At this point we don't even know the identity of the game ranch that has the disease, nor do we know whether and how widespread this problem may be in the province of Alberta. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Exactly whose privacy is being protected by the refusal to make public the identity of the game ranch on which chronic wasting disease was found? The elks'?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand from the hon. member's question of what value it would be for him to know the identity of that farm. The farm was immediately quarantined. Fortunately this industry has been vigilant in developing a monitoring and surveillance system that allows them to track the movement of every animal on or off a farm in this province. Not many industries can say that they can do that with assurance.

When there is a disease identified, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, an arm of the federal government, is responsible for carrying out the quarantine and for the disposal of the herd if that's required. We are assisting in the tracing. As I say, fortunately we can do that and have done it. The farms that might have received an animal or had a contact through animals from the affected farm are now quarantined until that testing has been done.

So, Mr. Speaker, what the value is for the Member for Edmonton-Highlands to know the name of the farm, I fail to see.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MASON: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that testing for chronic wasting disease can only be accurately performed on elk or any animals who are no longer alive, why has the government failed to order the slaughter of the remaining elk on this game ranch in order to determine how widespread the incidence of the disease is?

2:30

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this line of questioning clearly defines the need for some clarification and understanding for this hon. member of this whole industry and shows the lack of it. First of all, I did say in my first answer that this is entirely under the federal government, under the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Secondly, I did indicate that we have the best monitoring and surveillance and tracking system, that we can identify every animal. He should know that these animals are only slaughtered at certain abattoirs and they are tested at that time and the meat is held until that animal is declared clear of disease. This has been done prior to our having chronic wasting disease in this province. It's a federal matter, and if he wishes these answers, perhaps he would like to go under the federal FOIP legislation to get them.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MASON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that there is now a chronic wasting disease case in Alberta, can the minister

tell the House, whether her government or the federal government is responsible, why testing for this disease among elk continues to be voluntary?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we've had a voluntary monitoring system in this province for a number of years in this industry, and I must say that the compliance with the voluntary system has been extraordinarily high. We've had a number of discussions with the industry. They are very responsible people. We had a meeting, in fact, as late as yesterday morning, the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development and myself, to discuss this and other matters. I would expect that it will be mandatory at some point soon. However—however—before an animal is consumed or sold for meat purposes, it is tested, and that is the very important thing.

Mr. Speaker, chronic wasting disease has been in other provinces, our neighbours to the east, and in fact in other states, and we think that the fact that we've had this co-operation from the industry, this desire to have a good industry, we have managed to keep this disease out of Alberta until now.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

### Mental Health Legislation

REV. ABBOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of my constituents have recently raised concerns about mental health patients in their community who appear to need more help in maintaining their treatments. On Tuesday of this week I tabled a document with almost 500 signatures on it, asking to change the criteria for involuntary commitment or court-ordered treatment. My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Is the government considering setting up community treatment orders to require patients to take medication and receive proper treatment?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that this is a very important issue for families of persons with mental illness who may not comply with their prescribed treatment. Any time that we review mental health legislation that involves the detention and treatment of people with severe mental illness, it is always very, very complex and controversial. Mental health legislation does try to strike a balance between the needs of the individual who is being detained for treatment and the rights of society to be protected from any harmful activities of such individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I've received much information on this particular issue, and I can say that the opinions of both the medical field and the legal field vary greatly upon how to achieve this particular balance.

REV. ABBOTT: My next question is also to the same minister. Given that today's laws only intervene where there is a threat to oneself or others, what is the current system doing to support mental health patients who need help in maintaining treatment?

MR. MAR: Currently, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Mental Health Board provides services through community mental health clinics throughout the province and psychiatric hospitals, and of course there are also hospital programs that are operated by regional health authorities. Consistent with our response to the recommendations of the Premier's Advisory Council on Health report we are supporting the recommendation to integrate the operations of the Mental Health Board into regional health authorities in order to have a more co-ordinated and comprehensive system of mental health care.



## head: **Members' Statements**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

### **Team Alberta Arctic Winter Games**

MR. GOUDREAU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it is with great pleasure that I rise in this House to congratulate on my behalf and on behalf of our Member for Peace River the junior ladies' curling team from Grimshaw and Peace River. This team won gold at the recent Arctic Winter Games held in Nuuk, Greenland. This team comprised of Grimshaw's Amanda and Charlene Swicheniuk and third Kate Blakely helped skip Erin Brennan of Peace River bring this medal home. They represented their province and our northern communities very well. This Team Alberta swept their competition into submission in the double round-robin with six wins and no losses. In the semifinals they were victorious over the Yukon team, moving them on to the final game against the Northwest Territories, where they again defeated their opponent to win the gold ulu. The gold ulu is the medal awarded at the Arctic Winter Games. The ulu is the traditional Inuit knife commonly used for centuries as an all-purpose tool in the Arctic.

These girls have a history of winning, having won western Canada's junior championship in Calgary last year. No doubt we will hear more of their accomplishments and victories in the future. These young girls join other Peace region teams and individuals who came back with many medals. Many other ulus, or medals, were won in individuals and pairs sports events. Their efforts and victories speak well of what our young people can accomplish as well as the support received from their coaches and their parents. The communities of Peace River are very proud of their young athletes who qualified, participated, and won at the Arctic Winter Games in Greenland.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

### **Law Day**

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Law Day will be celebrated this Saturday, April 20, in both Edmonton and Calgary. Now, with all that's been in the news lately about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and access to legal aid and increasing court costs, here's an opportunity to learn more about the courts and the law. This event, sponsored by the Canadian Bar Association and organized by the Alberta legal community of judges, lawyers, students, clerks, and others associated with the law, invites anyone to drop into this free open house with booths, displays, tours, lectures, and mock trials. Have a look behind the scenes at how our courts work and what role each person plays.

In Edmonton Buccaneer Bill is charged with piracy and kidnapping in the children's trial. Calgary's children's trial will feature Harry Potter in the case of the missing ring. Trial times are repeated throughout the day. A family law custody trial in Calgary features the Calgary Stampeders mascot, Ralph the dog, and one of the football players from the team. Mock trials will also be held for the areas of criminal and civil law. There will also be many lectures on legal topics like wills and estates, small claims court, and taxation, reviewing lawyers' bills. Or in Calgary you may ask the lawyer at the ask-a-lawyer booth for free legal information. Both cities will feature a citizenship court, high school mock trials, and tours of the law building. In Edmonton all events run from 9:30 to 4 at the Law Courts Building on Winston Churchill Square, across from city hall.

In Calgary things kick off at 9 a.m. with an opening ceremony featuring a dragon dance and runs until 3 o'clock.

I have attended Law Day in the past. It is great fun and really interesting, and it's all free. My thanks to the Canadian Bar Association, the Alberta Law Foundation, the Law Society of Alberta, and their media sponsors for taking the extra time to provide all of us with a fun way to better understand how our courts work and what the people in them do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont.

### **Gerald B. Art**

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with the greatest pride and honour that I rise to recognize and celebrate the life of a longtime friend, mentor, and constituent of mine, Mr. Gerald B. Art. Gerry journeyed to his great reward on March 3, 2002, at the young age of 68 years. Gerry was many things to many people. As a volunteer, an employer, a partner, a friend, a husband, a father, and grandfather, in whatever capacity we knew him best, we recognized him as a wonderfully funny, generous, fair, warm, caring, and compassionate man. These characteristics were woven from the strands of a life of dedicated service to others before self. Along with his child bride, Eleanor, as he so fondly liked to call her, he served and contributed to the well-being of communities and constituencies wherever they lived in this great province. Together they made a positive difference in the lives of many without ever looking for any recognition in return.

2:40

Gerry's first involvement with the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party was as campaign manager for the late hon. Neil Crawford in 1971. He and Eleanor have remained involved with the party ever since. Gerry generously gave of himself to the Calgary-Egmont Conservative constituency association in every conceivable way and served as president from 1987 to 1989 for my predecessor, former Speaker David Carter. He was my nomination chairman in 1993 and continued to be actively involved in the association. Meanwhile, Eleanor served as secretary of the association for many years as well as being my president in 1995-96 and my very capable constituency assistant for many years. In 1997 Gerry and Eleanor helped launch yet another political career. The then new candidate for Calgary-Fort needed some organizational campaign management experience, and Gerry and Eleanor answered the call to help secure his victory.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, we will all miss this gentle man, Gerry Art, who did everything with dignity and class, and we're all better human beings for having had the privilege of living within the sphere of his influence. He enriched our lives.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

### **Earth Day**

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Who says you can't change the world? That question is the theme of Earth Day 2002. Earth Day founder, Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, proposed a national environmental protest in 1970 to shake up the political establishment and put a wide range of issues on the public agenda. On April 22 of that year his vision was taken to the streets, and the green movement got political. Here in Alberta we have the fortune of having grassroots groups advocating for the protection of our air, water, and soil; preservation of critical wildlife habitat; and appropriate development. These groups educate, advocate, question,

propose alternatives, and demand action. They run on shoestring budgets with hundreds of volunteer hours contributing to their success.

Alberta is not an easy province for greenies and tree huggers. Even those looking for moderate change backed up with facts and figures have met with resistance. In honour of Earth Day I would like to recognize some of the groups that make this Assembly a little more interesting: Albertans for a Wild Chinchaga, Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development, Federation of University Women, Clean Air Strategic Alliance, Toxics Watch Society, Edmonton Friends of the North, Sierra Club, Alberta Environmental Network, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association, Alberta Wilderness Association, Grassland Naturalist Society, and Trout Unlimited. This list is a long way from being all of the groups that are working to protect our environment, but these groups have written a lot of letters and made many phone calls. [interjection] They have let the members in this Assembly know what they want, and they are not afraid to repeat, repeat, repeat, in spite of what the Minister of Environment has just stated. So who says that you can't change the world? These groups haven't quit trying.

#### head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. MASON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm presenting a petition signed by 106 residents of Edmonton petitioning the Legislative Assembly "to urge the government to not delist services, raise health care premiums, introduce user fees or further privatize health care."

#### head: **Notices of Motions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 34(2)(a) to give notice that on Monday I will move that written questions appearing on the Order Paper do stand and retain their places with the exception of written questions 3 and 4.

I'm also giving notice that on Monday I will move that motions for returns appearing on that day's Order Paper do stand and retain their places with the exception of Motion for a Return 1.

#### head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: I know he visits quite often, Mr. Speaker, but he can't have that constituency.

I have a number of tablings today. The first is in response to the question I previously asked of the Minister of Seniors. I will table his former response made on March 20 of this year in budget estimates where he talked about cutbacks in his department for seniors' housing that are due to the restraints and that he's "hopeful that as the fiscal situation improves, [he'll] be able to reinstate those programs."

My second tabling is on behalf of the Leader of the Official Opposition. It's a petition supporting services to persons with developmental disabilities in Alberta. It's the appropriate number of copies with 54 signatures from people throughout Alberta.

My third tabling is a similar letter requesting that the Bighorn wildland recreation area be designated as a wildland park, using the 1986 boundaries. These folks are all from Calgary. The letters are from Shawna Nyberg, Brenda Everitt, Renee Huba, Kathryn Manny, Joanne Wyvill, Madalena Pinto, Connie Serelle, Fenella Hood, Marco Musiani, and D.G. Lavallee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table for the information of all hon. members of the Assembly three letters that I have. The first letter is dated July 13. It's a letter that I have written to the hon. Minister of Learning expressing my concern regarding the enforcement of trade qualifications for both apprentices and journeymen in this province.

The second tabling that I have is a letter that I received on July 25, 2001, from the hon. Minister of Human Resources and Employment. This letter certainly has to do with the concerns expressed about the lack of enforcement of compulsory certification trade qualifications.

The third letter, Mr. Speaker, is a letter that I received and that I was pleased to receive from the hon. Minister of Learning. It's dated July 27, 2001, and it is in response to concerns that were raised in the July 13 letter regarding enforcement of specific requirements of the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I have three letters today, once again all on the community lottery boards. The first letter is from Jennie Esdale, who started out as a young performer here in Edmonton and is now living in Calgary. She points out that the theatre company she operates with does an April Fools Day parade every year with their community. She asks that the community lottery board be reinstated. It's essential to their community.

The next tabling is directed to the Minister of Gaming from Joan Farkas also of Calgary. She's pointing out that revenue from gaming was intended to benefit the local communities, that charitable groups who are entitled to lottery funds have been treated with disrespect.

The third letter is again directed to the Minister of Gaming from Laurie Leier also of Calgary, pointing out that there is a misconception that there are other sources of funding available to make up for the cut community lottery board program and asking the government to reinstate the community lottery board program.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one tabling today. It's the appropriate number of copies of a letter dated April 6, 2002, from a Mary Paranchych, who is stating that it is extremely important to the cultural life, the community groups, and educational groups in this province that community lottery boards be continued. In fact, she goes on to say that it is imperative that they be reinstated.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the appropriate copies of a report titled the Fort McMurray DisAdvantage. This report was prepared by six teachers from that city and highlights the

problems of the high cost of living in Fort McMurray. Accompanying this report is an attachment of 22 signatures of other teachers, and they also share the concerns of this report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

2:50

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. MASON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling a letter from Lori Nicholls addressed to the Minister of Children's Services. As Ms Nicholls' previous letters to the minister have remained unacknowledged, she is once again writing to plead for immediate help from the ministry.

head: **Projected Government Business**

THE SPEAKER: The Official Opposition House Leader.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I would ask that the government share with us the projected House business for next week.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Next week starting Monday, April 22, in the afternoon we will of course deal with private members' business, Written Questions, and Motions for Returns, followed by Public Bills and Orders other than Government Bills and Orders. At 8 p.m. under Motions Other than Government Motions we'll deal with exactly that, and at 9 p.m. we will move to Government Bills and Orders for second reading of bills 23, 25, and 24, then to Committee of the Whole for bills 6, 7, 9, and 14, and otherwise as per the Order Paper.

On Tuesday afternoon under Government Bills and Orders and specifically under Committee of Supply we'll deal with the main estimates for the Department of Justice and as per the Order Paper. Tuesday evening at 8 we will have Committee of Supply, the main estimates for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, then second reading for any bills that still remain under second reading, then hopefully Committee of the Whole for bills 10, 13, 14, and 15, and otherwise as per the Order Paper.

On Wednesday afternoon under Government Bills and Orders the Committee of Supply will deal with the main estimates for the Department of Revenue and as per the Order Paper. On Wednesday evening under Government Bills and Orders the Committee of Supply will deal with the main estimates for International and Intergovernmental Relations; private bills, Bill Pr. 1, which I believe is from Edmonton-Meadowlark; second reading as well for any bills that remain in that particular stage of debate; and then Committee of the Whole should be able to deal with bills 16, 18, 20, and 22, and otherwise as per the Order Paper.

On Thursday afternoon of next week under Committee of Supply for main estimates the Department of Learning will be discussed and debated; otherwise, as indicated on the Order Paper.

THE SPEAKER: Now the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie on a point of order.

#### **Point of Order Parliamentary Language**

MS CARLSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I stand under Standing Order 13(1), *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms*, sixth edition, pages 45, 46, 47, and the *House of Commons Procedure and*

*Practice* by Marleau and Montpetit, pages 525 to 527 with regard to the Premier. Earlier this afternoon in question period in an exchange between the Premier and the Member for Edmonton-Riverview the Premier I believe twice used the term "misleading" in referring to the question asked by the Member for Edmonton-Riverview and certainly used the terms "misleading" and "misrepresenting" in the same sentence in a very aggressive manner with an intent to ensure that people believed that this member was trying to mislead Albertans. That certainly offends the rulings in those orders and books that I have stated and is laid out, Mr. Speaker, in the information you provided to us on November 29, 2001: *Expressions Ruled Unparliamentary by Speakers/Chairmen of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, 1905 – 2001*. As we review this, you talk about what happens if a member is found to use offensive or disorderly language, and we would at this time request that the Premier withdraw the unparliamentary words and phrases that he used in that particular exchange.

If we refer to your document of November 29, we will see that you have listed 13 different variations of the term "mislead" and have accompanied that with 27 references when this particular word or phrase has been ruled unparliamentary in this Legislature. We would like you to add this particular instance to the list and will be quite satisfied in our request if the Premier will withdraw that particular reference.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader on this point of order.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. I want to just correct the wrongful impression that may have been left with members of the House with respect to some of the statements made by the previous speaker from Edmonton-Ellerslie. While it is true that words like misinforming, misleading, mislead, and misrepresentations, and so on, are in some contexts deemed to be unparliamentary, so too is it true that within other contexts they are in fact deemed parliamentary. To cite the examples, I would cite for you and for all members of the House section 491 of this particular version of *Beauchesne* that I have, which is the 6th edition, wherein it states:

The Speaker has consistently ruled that language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken. No language is, by virtue of any list, acceptable or unacceptable. A word which is parliamentary in one context may cause disorder in another context, and therefore be unparliamentary.

On the preceding page, which cites *Beauchesne* 490, it would show you that "since 1958, it has been ruled parliamentary to use the following expressions." Included therein are the words misinforming, misleading, misled, and misrepresentations. So those particular words have been ruled parliamentary because of the context within which they were cited.

Now, we don't have the final edition of *Hansard* here, but from what I recall hearing the Premier say, he did say that it's this kind of misinformation and misrepresentation of the fact that does the Liberal Party such disservice, and so on. When you review what it is that the Member for Edmonton-Riverview said, you can understand that within the context of what that member said, the Premier's comments were in fact correct and they were bang on. In fact, I think what the Premier was attempting to do was to help set the record straight with respect to the comments made by the Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

There are a number of occasions that have arisen over the past several years, Mr. Speaker, during which time I've been in this House, where we've heard about the cut and thrust of the debate and how certain words can be used and misused perhaps, and so on, but

in this particular case I think the Premier was well justified in what he said, given the context of what he said and given also the context of what has happened earlier this week. I can appreciate where the opposition might be coming from, because it has been a bit of a difficult week, I'm sure.

On the point of misleading and misrepresenting let's review sometimes what gets said here too. Earlier in question period we heard one of the members from the opposition talk about some particular program in the Ministry of Seniors that had been apparently cut or removed or whatever. Shortly after that, we heard the Minister of Seniors get up and correct that statement too, but we didn't jump back and accuse them of anything on that particular case. It was a mistake on their part and the minister set them straight and life goes on.

Similarly, when the Member for Edmonton-Riverview continues to talk about private, for-profit health care and those types of things, I think those are damaging and misleading statements that could be made within the context of how he's using them. In other contexts perhaps they're acceptable, but that's not what we're all about with our Health Care Protection Act. I think that as evidence of what we are all about, there was a clear indication of that a year ago March 12, in which the issue was settled. Clearly, the majority of the public in this province understood very well what is publicly funded health care, which is what we have and what we're pledged to continue, and what is not. They also understood the difference between private hospitals, which are not allowed in this province, and special clinics that would allow insured services to be done in private settings but funded by public dollars. That's an important distinction. So there's no attempt to mislead or misinform here whatsoever.

I thank you for considering those points, Mr. Speaker, in your deliberation.

3:00

THE SPEAKER: Well, I was kind of hoping that when we arrived at Thursday of this week we wouldn't have to do this again. But okay; so be it. I appreciate the hon. member's desire to bring this matter forward and to bring this matter forward in the manner in which the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie has brought it forward, and I also recognize the response provided by the hon. Deputy Government House Leader with respect to this matter.

So what do the Blues actually say, which is important first of all I think as we begin with respect to this. In response to a question from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview the hon. the Premier said the following.

Mr. Speaker, I take great exception to the hon. member's statements that this is for profit. If there is a medically required procedure, whether it's an X ray, a CAT scan, an ultrasound, an MRI, or any other procedure that is prescribed, it is provided to the patient under the publicly funded health care system. So this kind of rhetoric, the kind that we heard during Bill 11, Mr. Speaker, is unnecessary, to say the least. It is misleading, to say the least. It is this kind of misinformation and misrepresentation of the fact that does the Liberal Party such disservice, and that's why they only have seven members.

It was at that point in time, I do believe, that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie intervened. Now, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie has quoted a variety of text, all very important text. I should point out one, probably the most important one that we have to deal with, dated November 29 of the year 2001, issued from my office: Expressions Ruled Unparliamentary by Speakers/Chairmen of the Legislative Assembly. The member is absolutely correct that in reading from that document of November 29 the following expressions were ruled unparliamentary, expressions such as

Mislead, continue to  
Mislead (the House)

Mislead (the House), deliberately/deliberately meant to  
Mislead the people, deliberate attempt to  
Misleading  
Misleading statement  
Misleading the Assembly/House/Albertans  
Misleading information  
Misleading, intentionally  
Misleading, totally  
Misleads, she deliberately  
Misled  
Misled, deliberately

This very same person, though, who issued this statement also issued another statement on the same day, November 29: Expressions Ruled Not Unparliamentary.

Misinformed  
Mislead/Misleading Albertans  
Misleading statements  
Misleading (the House)  
Misleading the public  
Misled  
Misrepresentation

Now, what is really the thrill of this job. As all members have known and all members have been told, it is the context and the manner in which the words are used. Several tests are included with respect to this. If the word "deliberately" is included in it, then it could be viewed as an attack on an hon. member, basically saying that that hon. member misinformed, which is not good – not good – and if you used the words "deliberately misinformed," that's no good at all. That will cause intervention and penalty.

A lot of it has to do with, as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie referred to, the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*.

The Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words were directed; the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber.

All of which has to be considered. And further, "Thus, language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary the following day," which is really wonderful guidance for someone in the chair to follow and deal with.

Now, what also is very important in this is whether or not it is actually directed towards an individual. In dealing with the statement in here, reading this again:

It is misleading, to say the least. It is this kind of misinformation and misrepresentation of the fact that does the Liberal Party such disservice, and that's why they only have seven members.

Presumably someone might argue that that statement was directed not to a particular individual of the House but to a particular group, which, then, sort of goes right by that individual and hits another wall.

So while the language is not the best language – and I heard the hon. Deputy Government House Leader admit that that was not the best utilization of language in the context; I recall hearing that – technically this is not a valid point of order as it would appear that the bottom line is that the comments seem to be directed to a group, not an individual, and, secondly, that no one is certainly deliberately misleading the Assembly.

Hon. members, given all that's really transpired in this Assembly in the past week, though, I'd like to just ask members to remember the following. It is the role of Her Majesty's Loyal and Official Opposition to ask questions of the government and to do what it can as it seems advisable to bring the government to account. That is a duty of the opposition. Also it is a duty of private members.

At the same time, the questions are to conform to certain practices that are identified. Questions have to be dealing with government policy, not seeking opinion, not being frivolous. The rules are all

identified. All members, not only members of the opposition parties, should read these rules. I think all government members should read these rules. Quite frankly, a fair number of all of these questions from both sides might be ruled out. The accepted practices are important.

At the same time that that advice is being provided to the members who direct questions, to those who reply to questions, the intent is to be brief, to as much as possible deal with the matter raised, and certainly not to have controversial or contentious comments in the responses that might lead to disorder. This is given to all.

It would have been really helpful in the case of this point of order if all the precedents in the past would have been a little clearer on it. The language is not the best language that we might want to use, ruled unparliamentary one day and parliamentary the next day in the context of what is said.

I really encourage all members to reflect on all the rules and the practices and the procedures and the traditions of our Assembly. Take some of these books out of the library if you don't have them. Read them on Saturday and Sunday. Come back energized with a new respect for the parliamentary tradition.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Government Bills and Orders**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, after continuing communication on this issue with the Official Opposition and with the third party, I seek the unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 58(4) to allow this afternoon's consideration of the estimates of the Department of Environment to go beyond two hours with the vote on these estimates to take place no later than 5:15 this afternoon as per Standing Order 58(5) or sooner if no one wishes to speak.

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

THE CHAIR: I'd like to call the Committee of Supply to order.

head: **Main Estimates 2002-03**

**Environment**

THE CHAIR: Are there any comments or questions to be offered with respect to these estimates? I'll call first of all on the hon. Minister of Environment to talk about his estimates for the year 2002-2003. The hon. minister.

DR. TAYLOR: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

DR. TAYLOR: Now, there's a good idea.

Mr. Chairman, I will keep my comments relatively brief today because I know that the opposition members have some questions they want to ask. I will certainly assure the opposition that they will get answers back. Their questions are all recorded in *Hansard*, and we will, as we always have, respond to your questions.

3:10

I would like to introduce a number of people that have joined us from the department. I'm surprised to see so many of them up there.

We have Stew Churlish; he's our chief financial officer. I must say that that's an appropriate name for a chief financial officer. We have Roger Palmer, my deputy minister. Alexandra Hildebrandt: I'm not sure what she does, but she's very valuable. We have Val Mellesmoen, my communications director, and Ken Faulkner, my executive assistant. Alexandra is a policy person.

On behalf of the Department of Environment I am pleased to present this budget and our estimates, which we hope you will approve. I want to point out that Alberta Environment really is the chief protector of Alberta's environment. We have a bunch of excellent people that do an excellent job of enforcing some of the toughest and most stringent regulations in North America and, if you check, around the world.

I would like to start with a few comments about the department. As you know, Mr. Chairman, we are a department that was created really just a little over a year ago. This is the first real budget of that new department. Of course, when it was created, the budget process for the old department had actually been ongoing, so this is the first real budget. Because of the new mandate we did take a look at our core business, and we did take a look at our key issues, our key priorities, and we came up with a number of new key strategies and a number of core businesses that we are tying our budget to. Rather than tying our budget to business units, what we've done on the suggestion of the Auditor General is to tie our budget to our core businesses.

Mr. Chairman, one core business that we've identified is environmental leadership, and for instance what you'd find in that core business is the long-term water strategy that we are developing. What you'd find in that core business is the emission standards that we've asked the Clean Air Strategic Alliance to develop around emissions from coal-generated electricity plants.

Another core business that we've identified is environmental assurance. An example there would be to maintain the high quality of Alberta's drinking water. For instance, Alberta is one of two provinces that has adopted, either through regulation or legislation, the Canadian drinking water quality standards. In fact, we have in many cases made our standards even tougher than the Canadian drinking water quality standards.

The third core business that we've identified is something we're calling environmental stewardship partnerships. What we're trying to do is develop partnerships with industry, with environmental groups to help us as we monitor and develop policy around environmental issues.

A fourth core business we've identified is environmental stewardship education, and what you're going to see as we move forward is an emphasis on educating the public and educating industry. We want to provide an education system so that people will quite clearly recognize what they should do to protect the environment. It's our philosophy, Mr. Chairman, that what we should be doing is educating the public, educating industry to prevent environmental disasters, not trying to clean a mess up after it's been made. Certainly we do have to clean up the messes, but we're much further ahead if we can prevent those messes from happening. So through our educational stewardship program we're going to put a lot of emphasis and we are putting a lot of emphasis on educating not only the public but industry.

Let me give you one example of education partnership. We're working with the Dairy Council as we speak, and you might have heard some of the excellent commercials on the radio or seen the excellent commercials on television on recycling the milk jugs. As we go forward, the milk jug recycling was only at about 40 to 42 percent. We've set some very strict guidelines, and we expect the milk jug recycling to be at 55 percent this year, 65 percent, and 75

percent over the next three years. So that's kind of an example of an educational partnership between Alberta Environment and a nongovernmental organization.

The fifth core business area that we've identified is hazard and risk management. Essentially we have to maintain a strong capacity to manage toxic spills, to manage drought, to manage floods, and this hazard and risk management is that type of area. We need to, as we go forward, be able to respond to air polluting events, be able to tell people, if they have a fire of some sort, if there is damage there, if there are emissions that are damaging to people from that fire or from that polluting, whatever that polluting event would be.

So those are the five core business areas that we've identified. What we've done is we've assigned a budget number, as the Auditor General has requested, to each of those core business areas, and we will go forward in our budget and develop those core business areas.

Now, one other, final area I'd like to address in the budget area is that there is a drop in the total budget, Mr. Chair, of approximately \$17 million. This drop is due to the elimination of onetime funding, projects that no longer need funding. I'll give you two examples. One example would be the animal study that's being run out of the University of Saskatchewan on the effects of flaring. What we did was we paid that forward, so we didn't need it in our budget for this budget year. Another example would be Climate Change. We've paid Climate Change forward, so we didn't need it in this budget year that we're looking at. Those would be the major programs that make up that \$17 million. There are a number of smaller programs, but those would be the major two programs. Now, I'll be very clear: those two programs are continuing. It's just that we were able to pay them forward last year, so we didn't have to include it in our budget of April 2002 to March 31, 2003.

With those comments I'll conclude and allow the opposition to present some questions.

THE CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to have an opportunity to respond to this year's Environment estimates. First of all, I would like to acknowledge that the Environment minister has been very straightforward throughout the course of his term as minister in terms of sharing information and briefing us on some of the key issues. Sometimes the briefing comes after the announcement, but that's okay. We'll work on that. I don't always agree, in fact I actually seldom agree, with the filters that he uses for decision-making, but it is always an interesting discussion and opens up lots of opportunity for debate for us in and outside of the House. So I thank him for that level of co-operation and look forward to that continuing.

I also would like to thank all of the staff that are here today. You all do a wonderful job. They have, I think, a tough time keeping this guy out of trouble, but they're also doing a good job on that side, and we'll stay tuned.

DR. TAYLOR: That's their primary job.

MS CARLSON: Yes. I understand that very well. I'm sure they understand that very well too. We'll see how things unfold in the future, but I know that they're up to the challenge, Mr. Chairman, and we'll have to keep on our toes to find those potholes that he steps into.

DR. TAYLOR: As long as the potholes aren't filled with something.

MS CARLSON: Yes. Well, you're the guy from rural Alberta.

For the debate this afternoon I'll make some opening comments and list some issues that I would like the minister to talk about, and if he doesn't mind responding to them in a general or more detailed fashion, whatever he prefers, and if there are specific details that he wishes to share with us at some later time, that would also be very acceptable. I find that budget debates are most effective for long-term use when we're able to get some answers on the floor of the Assembly, so thank you for that, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister.

3:20

The minister in his opening comments talked about his department being the chief protector of the environment of Alberta, and that's how I also see his role, so it's a little disappointing for me when I go through the core businesses of the department and see that they have such an economic development focus. I'll talk about that a little bit more in detail, but I do agree with him on what he sees as the chief role for this department. I don't necessarily see that they use that particular filter in making a great deal of the decision-making, and perhaps he can tell me how they develop the decision-making process that they use when they apply it to decision-making as the chief protector of the environment. I see a heavier focus on what we see under their core business goal 1, the key strategy of sustainable development, integrated resource management, where it states that they "develop a comprehensive series of sustainable development strategies to integrate the uses of land and resources." It would seem to me that it would be more appropriate, in keeping with what he stated as their chief role, if the statement at least said: develop a comprehensive series of sustainable and integrated protection and development strategies, or something along that line. So I would ask him to comment on that.

I think that, otherwise, the core businesses outlined here are good as sort of second-tier core businesses. What I would like to see a focus on for this minister and this department is a model of sustainable development that takes in more than the economic model that it looks like they're using as a descriptor. I think that there's a big need in this province at this time, and this government could show a real leadership role if they took a look at developing a science-based model of sustainable development. I think this is the particular minister to do this because of his background.

We're facing increasing competing interests for our land base and our water and our air in this province, the competing interests being people, municipal development, agriculture, industry, and wildlife needs. How do we make the decisions? I guess that is really the question. Right now what we see or what the perception is is that the decisions are made based on either who has the money or who has the influence or who has the biggest degree of pressure on the government. In talking about this particular model to industry and environmental groups, both sides are very receptive to looking at some other sort of a formalized structure being put in to decide who gets what in the province. If the government were to initiate a science-based study to decide what the land load is for all the competing interests in the different regions of the province . . . [interjection] Well, the minister is saying that they're doing something like that. I'd be very interested to hear about that. Perhaps I'll listen to what he has to say on that before I proceed with the other comments I have on this.

DR. TAYLOR: I'd just like to comment on that, the issue around integrated resource management. I think that's what the member is indicating. She's talking about the ability of the department to look at a particular land mass or a particular area of the province and try and develop an integrated resource plan, and that's exactly what we're doing. We have a very good model on the northeastern

slopes, and I think we sent copies to the member. If we didn't send you a copy of that, the northeast slopes management plan, we will send you one. What that northeast slopes management plan does is look at limiting the footprint of industry or industrial development on a particular area. For instance, in the northeast boreal, of course, you have a lot of forestry roads through particular forest areas. Well, what we would say as part of the plan is that if the oil industry or seismic wants to develop into a new area where there's forest and forestry wants to develop in that area, the industry should get together to limit the footprint and just have as small a footprint as possible on any one particular area.

Now, the northeast slopes plan is the first one that we've done, granted, but as we go forward, that is an initial model of what we want to do. We want to develop what we're calling integrated resource management plans for various areas around the province, and we will do several of those this year. I'm not sure how much the staff can do, because it's a public process and we get the public involved. We hold public meetings and ask the public. What this does is bring a balance between industry and the environment. It protects the environment.

The goal of the integrated resource management plan is to have as little disturbance to the environment as possible, and that's what this department is about. It's about protecting the environment and balancing economic development with that. It's quite clear from the World Economic Forum, from the World Bank that countries that have the healthiest economies also have the highest environmental sustainability index. Countries that have the lowest GDPs – and these are 2000 studies – have the lowest environmental sustainability index. So a country like Haiti, Eritrea, or Ethiopia has a very low environmental sustainability index. What we're trying to do with these integrated resource management plans is do exactly what you said. Have we gone far enough, you know, fast enough? Maybe not. Have we started? Yes, and we will continue along that line.

THE CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your comments on that. We do have the information on the northeast slopes and the management plan. It doesn't really address what I'm talking about here because what we're looking for is something that goes a little further. You talk there about limiting the industry footprint in a particular area. I think there's a question that needs to be asked prior to making that decision, and that is: should that particular footprint be there anyway, or does it even need to be limited? What is it that we need to actually decide here as the criteria for deciding what the land-load base is; that is, how much can the land sustain? I think we have some areas in this province that are overdeveloped and some that are underdeveloped. So how do we decide that, and then how do we decide who gets there and whether or not the next step is an integrated plan where industry looks to limit their footprint?

[Mr. Klapstein in the chair]

The University of Alberta has an excellent environmental planning area that's quite interested in looking at designing a model that could actually decide, could define within some reasonable parameters what the land-load base is. For instance, in your part of the province, where we're seeing increasing pressure on water and increasing pressure to have intensive livestock operations, what is the science-based land load there? What can that land base sustain, given the resources it has available to it right now, in terms of industry, people, municipalities, and wildlife? Let's look at that

from a science-based position and then decide whether or not we can take any more. If we have too much, what do we do to mitigate long-term damages? The same in all the other regions of the province.

Now, I've had some fairly detailed discussions with people in oil and gas and forestry on this as well as with environmentalists. We would expect that environmentalists would be happy with this kind of a proposal, but would industry live with it? Would they be happy? We have already some commitments of financial support for this kind of research should it go forward, because what everybody is looking for, on both sides of the issue here, is a roadmap to be able to follow that takes out the political lobbying, the chance situations, the court challenges that we've seen happen here in the past. So I would respectfully ask the minister to take a look at something like that, because I think that could show real leadership.

3:30

We have a unique opportunity in Alberta because of the resources available here in terms of environmental and industry and dollars available to the government to really be a best practices province. Now, I know that in many ways we are, but I don't want us to compare ourselves to Third World countries. I want this province to be able to say that we are leaders in the globe. We have an opportunity to do that, and we have an opportunity to preserve areas that are quite unique but may not be so unique five to 10 years from now if we don't take a look at these kinds of practices.

A short sustainable development definition that I particularly like and I think lends itself to developing this science-based kind of research is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. That takes into account more than just the balancing of resource management and industrial development with environmental needs I think. I think it's something that we need to take a look at.

If we take a look at what people are starting to talk about globally, they're starting to talk about things like a quality of life gap where standard measures that we use, and are particularly used in this province, that measure the economy and changes in the GDP and inflation and employment fail to tell us about long-term sustainability of our economic development and how it translates or fails to translate into quality of life. Certainly the environmental gap falls into that kind of a measure.

Everybody knows that human activity leads to disruption of global climate, but we find also that the actions of governments and industry are quite short of what's needed in the long term to prevent severe damage to economies and environments. The minister alluded to this when he talked about good environmental practices leading to wealth in areas. We really need to take a look at the beneficial kinds of changes that we can see in the balance between economies and environments and the resource consumption that people have, because we're not where we need to be, and I think we need to just have a little bit of a change in focus in how we determine what that is. We don't actually, I think, incorporate risk assessment and management as policy in making decisions when we talk about sustainability, and that could be easily incorporated into this kind of science-based review.

So if the minister could just briefly comment on that, I would appreciate it.

DR. TAYLOR: I'll be very brief. Once again I would suggest to you that that's exactly what the integrated resource management plan does. It does take the science into account. I mean, we're not perfect. We can always improve, and we certainly will take your comments seriously as we go forward.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Minister.

Next I would like to touch on your comments on the Kyoto agreement and where this goes in terms of leadership in the province. I'm hoping that the minister isn't sticking to his guns of fighting it out with the feds at all costs.

DR. TAYLOR: Absolutely I am.

MS CARLSON: Well, I think that that is an eventual stage you can get to. I don't disagree with that, that potentially long-term that may be where this all ends up. But I think there's again a real leadership position that this government needs to take, because let's face it; we have the most at risk here as a province in any decisions that are made long term.

[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

Now, I'm hoping that there's the public side of this issue where you're ready to meet at high noon and shoot it out, but I'm also hoping that there is a private component to what this government is doing and what this minister is doing in terms of moving this province to the forefront of decision-making on what happens in the long term around CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. I don't necessarily agree that the Kyoto accord should be ratified by Canada. I don't think that it takes us where we need to go, but there are some issues there that need to be clearly identified. We need to do something. I think everybody agrees with that. I think industry agrees with that. Certainly that would be the information that I have, and that's a topic that I know quite well because I did my master's thesis on it. I think that we're seeing industry lead on this issue, and I think the government is still falling behind in terms of where they need to be pursuing issues. If you just pick a fight with the feds, why would they go to the table and start to work with you on some of the issues that are important to Alberta, which has such a fossil fuel dominant position?

Where are you in terms of pushing forward with issues like tradeable permits, carbon credits, and sinks? I think that's a position that Alberta can carve out for itself and pursue aggressively at the federal level, because those are the areas that we're going to be hurt with. What are you doing in terms of taking a look at the emissions following the buyer rather than all the risk being assumed by the producer? If these guys want our oil and gas, there's a cost associated with that. There's an environmental cost, and what are you doing to push that along in terms of it being accepted as an option?

I received just recently, yesterday or the day before, some great information on the Breton Plots Soil Conservation Society and some good work that they're doing. They talk about how the practices that they've had in terms of learning how to manage unproductive soils have led to the development of economically viable agriculture over a large portion of Alberta. Particularly with regard to Kyoto they've shown that certain practices have increased sequestration of carbon in the soil and therefore reduced carbon dioxide. Other research has shown how certain practices reduce the amounts of nitrous oxide and other greenhouse gas, and they are relevant in terms of carbon credits. So in addition to that federal component, what else is this government doing particularly to push along the research and development side of some of these issues?

DR. TAYLOR: Well, thank you very much. I'm very pleased that our persuasive arguments have convinced the hon. member that the federal government shouldn't sign the Kyoto agreement, and I hope she's communicating that to her federal counterparts.

Now, what have we done and where are we going? I would say that on the whole we work very closely with the federal government on a number of these issues. Just last weekend I spent considerable time with both the federal minister and his deputy minister. As a direct result of the effort that we put into working with the federal government, they included earlier on last year the concept of forestry and agricultural sinks in their negotiating position. That was a direct result of Alberta working with the feds on that, and they did get the United Nations, the climate change agreement, to agree to include both forestry sinks and agricultural sinks. I won't go into the details on explaining what they are, but you obviously know.

Now, the other thing that we have worked with the federal government very clearly on after Bonn, which was last July or August, was to get them to include what we're calling clean energy exports in the agreement. It has become quite difficult with the U.S. not a signatory to the agreement because most of our energy – and I'm just going by recollection here. I think about 80 percent of our exported natural gas goes to the U.S., and about 60 or 65 percent of our oil exports go to the U.S. That's recollection. I could be a few percentage points out. When we move particularly our natural gas to the U.S. and replace coal or some oil-burning furnaces or whatever we're replacing it with, we should get clean credits for that, and both the federal government and us agree on that.

That's a direct result of us working with the federal government in Bonn, and I can tell you that at Bonn I had very good co-operation with the federal government. I couldn't attend the negotiations because unfortunately Alberta is not a federal state. Only the federal states could attend the negotiations, but we did meet every morning. We met with the federal negotiators every morning that the negotiations were going on for anywhere from an hour and a half to two and a half hours. They met with us and they told us what had happened the previous day, where they saw it going, what was Alberta's position. Quebec was there as well. I can't remember if it was just Alberta and Quebec. There may have been one other province. I can't recollect. What is Quebec's position on this? What is Alberta's position? Where do you think we should be going? I found the federal negotiators to be very frank, very open, and very honest, and we worked very closely with them. So I see that ongoing working relationship to continue.

3:40

On February 21, I believe it was, we presented a paper in Ottawa at an invited conference that outlined Alberta's strategy, its kind of overarching strategy as it deals with climate change. We've always said that climate change is important, and with or without Kyoto Alberta will go forward with a strategy and an action plan.

You were asking specific questions about emissions, trading, sinks, and so on, and I can tell you that that will be part of our action plan that we will be presenting to the joint ministers' conference in May, May 21, 22, in that time frame, in Charlottetown. There will be very clear actionable items. It will have a great emphasis, I'm sure, not to give anything away, but energy conservation certainly will be a large part of what we go forward with in any action plan.

Industry is co-operating with us. We've got a group called Climate Change Central. The board is made up of industry. It's made up of environmental NGOs. Who else? Agriculture is there. Transportation is there. Some academics are there. It's a very good and effective board. They're actually working very closely with my climate change people in the department headed by John Donner, who's an ADM, working very closely with the Climate Change Central group to actually work on and develop this action plan. It's actually developing as we speak. As I say, we will be releasing that publicly at the May 21, May 22 environment ministers' conference.

We want this to be a leader. We want people to look at this and



say: you know, Alberta's got a very clear action plan. Other provinces should be able to look at it and be able to generalize their issues around CO<sub>2</sub>, and we hope the federal government will take a look at it and say: yes; here's an action plan that will actually reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> as we go forward. Of course, we have to do this in the North American context. As I said earlier, the largest amount of our trade – in energy issues, in all areas, manufacturing, whatever – is going to the U.S. So we have to be cognizant of what the U.S., our largest trade partner, is doing, and we have to develop our action plan within the North American context.

The Europeans quite clearly do what they do within the European context. They have something called a European bubble. They move things around. So, for instance, Portugal can increase its CO<sub>2</sub> by about 30 percent and still be at a Kyoto target. What they do is they take that Portuguese 30 percent and move it around and artificially reduce.

I want our action plan to be really centred on actually reducing CO<sub>2</sub>, because that's the purpose. With or without Kyoto makes no difference. Preferably without, because the technology will not get us there in time. I believe that this needs to be a technologically driven process, not a politically driven process. So you will see in our action plan a big emphasis on developing technology: sequestration technology, sink technology, agricultural sink technology, forestry sink technology, and so on. That's the way we're moving.

I mean, there's always going to be, you know, discussion around any action plan just as there was around the strategy that we released, but I think overall that people will be impressed and pleased. Once again we were seen as leaders when we put the strategy out there, and I believe that we will be seen as leaders as a province when we put our action plan out there too. So you can look forward to that mid-May.

THE CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two more points that I would like to address before I yield the floor to other opposition members. The first is a follow-up to what the minister has said, and thank you for the information. It's certainly more progressive than what we have been reading in the newspapers in terms of your position and where you're going. As a follow-up to that, without giving away anything that you can't disclose about the action plan in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions, I'm hoping that you can tell us that included in at least the public education component of the strategy is the public participation in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and their required participation in reducing that. We know that the focus has so far been on industry, but in fact they aren't the greatest emitters if we take a look at it on a collective basis.

DR. TAYLOR: If I may make one small correction, actually in Alberta industry is the biggest emitter. The oil sands and electrical generation emit about 52 to 55 percent of the CO<sub>2</sub>, but in other provinces it's different. In most other jurisdictions in Canada it's largely a consumer issue. And, yes, we will very clearly deal with the consumer issues and public education on energy conservation as we work through this action plan.

THE CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, and eventually we'll get Edmonton-Strathcona in here.

MS CARLSON: Yes. One more point. Mr. Minister, I would like to get some opinions from you on genetically modified organisms. We know that primarily the focus for this issue is an agricultural issue, but there is certainly an environmental component to it that

fits in with a number of the goals and core businesses that you've outlined. Two points here. One is on insect resistant strains and GMOs and the potential for them being toxic to their predators, like critters that eat grasshoppers, caterpillars, things like that. What are you looking at in your department in terms of that kind of long-term environmental risk, and what impact does a crop developed using biotechnology have on the environment?

If we take a look at the July 2, 2001, *Agri-News* put out by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, on page 3 they talk about how "biotechnology may bring animal care benefits and challenges" and that "bio-engineered livestock may bring many human health and environmental benefits." So I am wondering if you can comment on the potential environmental benefits you see on the side of GMOs and the environmental problems that we may see. We hear a lot these days about how GMOs will modify the landscape and impact particularly on forests. So if you can give us some general comments, and if you're doing anything specifically, I would appreciate that being provided.

DR. TAYLOR: As you correctly identified, this is largely an agricultural issue, and I'll actually have to get back to you on that and see exactly what we are doing within the department on GMOs. I could comment, I suppose, that you have a genetically modified organism sitting to your immediate left, but I wouldn't. We will get back to you on that issue.

THE CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise with pleasure to ask a few questions of the Minister of Environment concerning the budget and related matters and policies. I was listening to the minister's comments on the position that the minister and I guess the government have taken on the Kyoto accord, or protocol, and its signing. The minister seems to have a sort of ambivalent position on the climate change issue, and Kyoto is only one instrument, I guess, to address the problem. He would like to go with Kyoto but not necessarily. He says preferably not, and perhaps uses his own action plan instead. I have a question on the reason that the minister has used and the government has used. Why would Kyoto in its present form make us economically uncompetitive vis-a-vis U.S.? True; 80 percent of what Alberta produces goes there. I guess 75 percent of what Canada produces goes there too, but there are two ways of dealing with it. One is to accept the U.S. position as is and then develop our own responses, because the U.S. position is out there and we don't want to say anything about it.

To what extent has the minister expended any efforts to convince the federal government and to work with it and other provinces as well – because the other provinces are players too, I guess, in this whole process – to collectively put pressure on the American government to change its position? That to me is one of the many responses. If they don't change at all, then of course I'd like to see what your own action plan is if you don't accept Kyoto. What pressures have you mounted either as a provincial representative, all by yourself, or jointly in co-operation with federal and provincial governments?

3:50

DR. TAYLOR: Thank you for a legitimate question. I will say that we have the support of a number of provinces quite clearly: the strong support of British Columbia; the strong support of Saskatchewan, a good ND . . .

DR. PANNU: Did my question not get through?

DR. TAYLOR: I'm going to get there.

... strong support of Ontario and New Brunswick, so we have strong support from those people on our position. They actually see us as leaders, and most of the country sees us as leaders. No, I don't think Kyoto is the appropriate instrument, period. Okay? Because we will not get there by 2010. The first measurement period is 2008 to 2012. Canada gets measured, if Kyoto is ratified, in 2010. We don't even measure it ourselves. Do we get these UN cops coming in to measure Canada? So you've got some sovereignty issues around there as well.

So Kyoto is not the instrument. That does not mean that climate change is unimportant. What it does mean is that Kyoto is not the way to address it. We need to address climate change through the development of technology for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> and other pollutants. As a matter of fact, the fellow that first wrote about climate change in 1988, a NASA scientist whose name was Hanson, is actually backing off, as he's kind of Mr. Climate Change. What he's saying now is that certainly CO<sub>2</sub> is important, but it's the other issues – the NOx's, the nitrous oxides, the sulphur oxides, and the particulate matter – that make people sick, and we need to be spending more time on those than we do on CO<sub>2</sub>, because as you get rid of those, you also get rid of CO<sub>2</sub>. Quite frankly, Kyoto says nothing about SOx's, the sulphur oxides, and particulate matter and so on.

Now, I'm kind of getting around to your question eventually. So what I'm saying is that, no, we have no intention of trying to put pressure on the U.S. to accept Kyoto. It is an inappropriate instrument to deal with the issue of climate change. Climate change needs to be dealt with through the development of technology. That is not what Kyoto is about. Kyoto is largely about a wealth transfer from the industrialized world to the developing world, and that may be an appropriate thing to do. In fact, in my own personal opinion I think that probably as an industrialized world we need to do a lot more for development in the Third World, but if that's the issue, then let's do it appropriately. Okay? Let's do it in a direct fashion, not through some international treaty that has little to do with actually dealing with the issues of the developing countries. So, no, I don't intend – the federal government may be trying to put some pressure on the U.S. to change their position, but you can see how much success they've had, and I agree with the U.S. that Kyoto is an inappropriate instrument to deal with the issue.

THE CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad you made yourself clear. The federal government is trying to seek some modifications, I guess, in the Kyoto before they will sign. They will not have your support regardless. Is that what you're saying?

DR. TAYLOR: Well, one of the issues that we've got on the federal agenda and that the federal government has put on the international agenda – because of course we can't put it on the international agenda ourselves – is clean energy exports. The Prime Minister has commented on it; a number of senior ministers have commented on it. That's clean energy exports, getting credit for those clean energy exports, being crucial to Canada's position on ratification. If they do get the clean energy exports as part of the UN treaty, which I don't believe they will – and last weekend in Banff when I was there, the Europeans quite clearly said that they will not allow that to happen. The Germans have said independently that they will not allow clean energy exports to be part of the treaty. So I don't believe they'll get it done.

Let's assume that there's some miracle that happens and the

federal government gets clean energy exports as part of the treaty. At that stage, then what we will do is we will reanalyze our data. We will put that into the different computer models that we're using to estimate costs, and we will see if that changes the amount of damage it will do to the Alberta economy, first, and to the Canadian economy secondly. So if they get it, does it automatically mean that we'll agree with ratification? No. Does it automatically mean that we'll agree with not ratifying? No. What we have to do is to take the information we get and put it into our different modeling scenarios we're using and see what effect that will have on the economy.

THE CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me move from there to the Alberta strategy and action plan. We now know that the government of Alberta is drafting an action plan. We also know that it will be officially released on May 21, May 22. Would you be able to release a draft of this for public debate in Alberta so that Albertans, your and my constituents, can have some foreknowledge of what you will be proposing on the 21st, 22nd? What's wrong with making your plans public to Albertans, to whom you and I owe an obligation to be open with?

I have a couple of other questions. I may as well make those. I want to thank my colleague here from Edmonton-Gold Bar, who has kindly permitted me to ask you a few questions because I do have to leave the House for a while after that.

I see that environmental stewardship is one of the main businesses of your department as goal 3 in the business plan. It says that stewardship is best achieved through "generating awareness and understanding that encourages environmentally responsible behaviour." I presume both on behalf of the government and on behalf of all of us as individuals, stewardship by all Albertans. Would this goal not be seriously addressed if in fact you made a commitment here today that you are going to take your draft first to your own citizens of Alberta rather than taking it somewhere else first? Why would you not do it in light of that?

My second question is about your reference to CO<sub>2</sub>, that the control of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is important. Whatever strategy of the province you lead this government to develop will have to address of course the matter of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through power generation. I was taking part in the debate yesterday afternoon on the Energy department's estimates, and there was a forecast there, a projection that over the next four or five years in Alberta the alternative energy generation will remain at 9 to 10 percent. It's 8 to 9 percent now. It's remained fairly at that level, and the primary reliance in this province will remain on coal to produce energy. Of course, the province is encouraging greater amounts of generation of power primarily obviously through the burning of coal. Coal burning leads to the release of all kinds of pollutants including CO<sub>2</sub>. What plans do you have as the Minister of Environment, the advocate of environmental enhancement and protection, I guess, to act on that front to limit, to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions even if you don't like Kyoto and you won't go along with it?

4:00

DR. TAYLOR: Let me deal with the first issue, which was releasing the document beforehand. One, we have a timing issue that's simple and practical. We're working very hard to get it ready, and it'll probably be ready about the week before we go. So that we do have some feedback from Albertans, we have 74 members in this House that represent the largest percentage of Albertans, and we will have those members certainly review it before we take it anywhere. Simply there's a timing issue, and we will do that.

AN HON. MEMBER: I didn't know you considered that important.

DR. TAYLOR: Absolutely they are important, and we hope to have them support us next time around, which I'm sure we will.

So it's a timing issue largely, and we will release it. When we release it, it will be the first step of an action plan that we will be asking for feedback on. It's not something that's written in stone. It'll be the first step. As I said a little earlier, I'm sure there's going to be lots of feedback on it because it will certainly be somewhat controversial.

Now, a very important point that you've raised is in regards to the emissions issue and burning of coal. I will point out that Alberta has the toughest standards for provinces where we burn coal. B.C. has, for instance, tougher standards on coal burning for power production than we do. But guess what? They don't have any coal-generated power plants because they're all hydro. So in jurisdictions that actually burn coal to produce power right across North America, we're equivalent. Does that mean they're tough enough? No, it does not.

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

As you know, last July we toughened up the standards some. We made them more stringent. I have asked the Clean Air Strategic Alliance, which is not a government body – it's once again made up of NGOs and industry – to come up with new standards for our emissions. They are presently working on that, and it's going to be a very interesting discussion to see what they come up with.

Also, I've asked them to take a look at: should the new standards that they come up with be applicable to existing plants? In other words, should existing plants be grandfathered? My personal preference – and I don't want to prejudice the discussion that CASA has – is that existing plants should not be grandfathered. But that represents my personal viewpoint. I think that when we put in the new standards, when a licence renewal comes up, those standards should apply to the licence renewal. Hopefully nobody from the Clean Air Strategic Alliance reads *Hansard* and accuses me of trying to prejudice their discussion. That's a personal opinion. What we're going to do is we're going to get the results back from the Clean Air Strategic Alliance.

On coal I would mention that I did spend some time – I don't know; it would be a month ago now – with a group called the Clean Coal Alliance or something like that. It's a group that's made up of Alberta, Wyoming, Los Alamos lab, a whole bunch of groups around North America. We're all putting money in to see if we can burn coal cleanly. The scientists are telling me, at least the ones I met with that are involved with this, that in 15 years or less we will burn coal essentially without emissions. We'll have figured out how to get rid of the NOx's, the SOx's, and the PMs, and we will separate the CO<sub>2</sub> from those and sequester the CO<sub>2</sub>. We might use it for enhanced oil recovery.

In fact, we're working in Saskatchewan with PanCanadian, the federal government, and the Saskatchewan government. [interjections] I know it sounds shocking to you, but we are very pragmatic people and like to help out the poorer neighbors, you know. We're working with those groups on carbon recovery, pumping CO<sub>2</sub> into the ground to help oil recovery. That project is happening right now, as we speak, in Weyburn, and we will continue to do that. The hope is that as we go forward, as I say, within 15 years or less, we should be able to be burning coal with virtually no emissions and separating CO<sub>2</sub> out and sequestering it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One more question. On the issue of clean coal-burning technologies I understand that TransAlta already has a plant in Washington state which uses state-of-the-art technology and that there are technologies currently available that will help reduce those. I understand that those are not as alternatives on the table for consideration as requirements for our plants for expansion. I do want to commend you for the position that you just stated with respect to you're being against grandfathering the older technologies, and I think you do have my plaudits for taking that position.

There are other technologies available which are better already, and you said yourself that climate change should be technology driven. On that one, I think you will recall that during the '70s energy crisis, when the government of the U.S. decided to reduce both consumption and in California of course emissions, they said: we're going to generate the technology that will help us get there. When they wanted to get into space, they didn't wait for that technology to happen; they set their targets and then said: we will produce the technology to get there. So I guess your logic on that one is somewhat weak, the cause and effect. You don't wait for the technology to happen before you do this. So I'd like you to address that.

My question is on water now, the last one I will ask of you. Again in the business plan you have: "develop a partnership with industry to collect [information] and analyze the state of Alberta's ground water." I'd like you to comment on the nature of these partnerships that you may already have in place or that you are hoping to develop. Why is industry being brought into the study phase? You know, at this stage is it really an enormously expensive project? Is that why? [interjection] Let me complete, please. I'm sorry. A couple of questions on it.

I'm a little bit worried, you know, about bringing the industry into it at this stage. I'd like you to assure me that it won't be a prelude to the commodification of water later on, that you won't get into the business in a big way of turning it into a commodity and businesses making huge profits from it. So that's why I raised that question.

The issue of toxins that are released into the water, you know, groundwater, surface water, both through intensive agriculture and intensive livestock operations, whose growth is being encouraged, I guess, as a matter of policy by this government, is causing concern to lots of communities, lots of people, particularly in certain parts of the province. We know that the E. coli 0157 counts in different parts of the province are different, and in some parts of the province they go above the guidelines that are set by the province for public health reasons. The Chinook region is one such region. I won't go into the numbers here. You are familiar with those, so you'll, I'm sure, be able to respond to this.

The release of toxins into water is a matter of growing concern, and the impact, particularly of nitrogen-based toxins in water, is a source of serious health consequences. I'll give you an example. In Indiana some women who lived in close proximity to these water sources that were contaminated, that carried higher levels of toxins, nitrate-based and nitrite-based, had miscarriages a total of six times – there were three women – within two years. All three lived near an ILO and were drinking well water with nitrate levels greater than 10 ppm. You would know what ppm means; I don't. When they switched to drinking bottled water, they were able to have healthy, full-term pregnancies. Just one example of the kind of negative health consequences that can result from progressive release of toxins into water. So any comments, any plans?

4:10

DR. TAYLOR: Let me just talk first about partnerships. I thought that from your perspective you'd want everybody to be involved with water, all the different partners to be involved as we go forward. That's the goal of our partnership. We want to involve industry; we want to involve the public. You can see us doing that right now in the water strategy. I mean, we had originally scheduled only 12 meetings around the province, and we had such demand in fact in Calgary that we had to have a second meeting because we had to turn people away. I can tell you that there have been a number of very interesting meetings, because people feel very strongly about some of these issues and there are a number of very strong different viewpoints. So it's our goal in partnerships to bring in industry and the public and environmental NGOs.

Now, in particular to groundwater the biggest utilizer of groundwater in this province is the oil industry. One of the things that is coming up quite clearly in the public meetings that we're having is: should the oil industry be using these numbers of gallons of fresh water that they are using? That's clearly a discussion point. Some people in the meetings are suggesting that they should be using the saline, or salty, water, that you can get out of the ground as well. Depending on the depth you go now – I'm not a water well driller – you can apparently either attract saline water or fresh water. So perhaps you drill a little deeper and get saline water to use in your oil wells.

I'm not saying that any decisions have been made. I'm just saying that the value of what we're doing with the water strategy is that we are having these discussions openly and publicly for the first time I believe in Alberta. I don't know what's going to come out the other end, but we will have to see what comes out the other end as we work through this strategy. So I feel strongly – and I'm sure that the department does too – that we have to have everybody involved in these partnership efforts, particularly when it comes to water.

Now, in regard to ILOs, as you're aware, the ILO has to go through the NRCB, but the water issue we still deal with. Most ILOs that I'm aware of need to have water. Whether it's chickens or pigs or feedlots, they have to have water. So after it gets through the NRCB process, it has to apply for a water licence, and one of the things we're very careful of in water licence applications is how it affects the surrounding groundwater, how it affects other neighbours' wells.

I can tell you of one recently that was in my constituency. The gentleman wanted to put in an ILO, not a large one like some people are projecting but a small one. It's an individual farmer. He's in the cattle business, and he wanted to expand his operation into the pig business so he'd be a little more diversified. It's a one-man farm, a one-man operation, so it's not these huge things that you think of when you think of some of these hog operations. We asked him to hire an independent hydrologist and give us a report, which he did. He had to drill some test wells and monitor those test wells first for volume and then to see if there's any contamination. So he had to drill test wells in a number of different positions and a number of different distances that will be monitored by hydrologists.

We recognize that one of our prime jobs is to protect the drinking water supply of Albertans. That's why we as well, working with the health units, allow people to bring in – you probably live in Edmonton, but say that you lived in Sherwood Park or someplace where you might have a well. Do they have wells in Sherwood Park? I don't know. In the rural areas, in Strathcona county, where they might have some wells, you can take a sample of that well, and then certainly we will test it, and if there are pollutants in that well, then we will try and help you fix that. So we're very conscious of drinking water and it being very important to Albertans.

As I said earlier, you know, we have some of the toughest drinking water standards in the country. There are only two jurisdictions that have adopted through legislation or regulation the Canadian drinking water quality standards. Alberta is one of those jurisdictions, and on top of that we've even strengthened some of those Canadian drinking water standards; that is, we've made them more stringent. Our standards are even more stringent than the Canadian drinking water quality standards. So we're very conscious of the water issue, and we'll continue to be conscious of it, and that's why we ask, depending on the situation, for monitoring of wells around ILOs. There have to be hydrology reports and so on. So we will do our utmost to protect and make sure that what you're talking about doesn't happen.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

DR. TAFT: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the responsiveness from the minister. I've been trying to attend to his comments so that I don't duplicate some of the questions, and if I am duplicating them either because my mind wandered or because I was out, just tell me and I'll check them out in *Hansard*.

I might as well start with a very specific question. It jumps right out from the estimates. I'm on page 165 of the estimates. I wouldn't be surprised if this has already been addressed in discussions while I was outside of the Assembly. Under expenses, environmental leadership, environmental assurance, and environmental stewardship, there are notable declines in budgeted expenses for each of those areas, most especially environmental leadership, which is going to drop, it looks like, from about \$21.4 million to just under \$10 million, so over a 50 percent drop. Could you tell us what's happening there that there's such a dramatic drop, and how does what's happening there feed into the mandate of your department for things like stewardship and leadership and so on?

DR. TAYLOR: That question actually hasn't been asked, no, so I'm pleased that you did ask it. I would point out that there was a drop, which I did address a little earlier, of \$17 million in our budget overall, but that was for onetime projects. Okay? As I said earlier, we have this flaring study going on that you're familiar with, and we had some of it budgeted for 2002-2003, and what we were able to do is pay it forward, so we haven't included it in our budget 2002-03. We pay forward our contribution at the end of this year. Same with Climate Change Central. You'll see that there's no budget in there for Climate Change Central. That doesn't mean Climate Change Central is going to disappear. In 2002-2003 it's not in there. What we did was we paid it forward at the end of the 2001-2002 year. Just in terms of the \$17 million, the drop, those were the two biggest areas of the \$17 million that we dropped, and there were some other onetime expenses that we no longer needed.

Now, in terms of your question, that brings us back to our core budget. We've identified in our core budget a number of issues, and we're going to move resources around in our core budget. For instance, we want to spend a lot of time and effort on environmental education and environmental stewardship, so what we're doing is moving dollars around inside our budget. I don't know if you were here when I identified our five core businesses, which are environmental leadership, assurance, stewardship partnership, stewardship education, and hazard and risk management. Those are our core businesses, and what we're doing along that, then, is we've identified some key policy areas. Okay?

If you have a matrix – I should actually get you one of these. Have you got one? Okay. This is the matrix I'm working off, and

it's kind of a place mat. I'd encourage you, if you don't have one, to get back to us, and we'll get you a few, and you can sit at your dinner table and put them under your clear glass plates, because they are laminated. Our core businesses are along there, and our policy areas are down this side, so you've got very good access. Water, air, climate change, resource planning, and regulatory systems are located down as key policy areas.

4:20

What we're doing is allocating what we consider our budget to our important core business and on the other access policy areas. Let me give you an example of that. For instance, for water we're allocating \$35 million across those core businesses. Across those five core businesses we're allocating \$35 million. That's by far the biggest, \$35 million. The other big one across those core businesses is resource planning.

How do we manage our resources? I talked a little bit earlier on integrated resource management, and that would be as part of those core businesses. So what we're trying to do is locate our dollars where we feel that we're going to have the biggest pop, the biggest bang for the buck. One of the areas that we're really keen on is water, for instance. We're spending a lot of time and effort around water, water strategy, and so on. I mean, would I like to have more money? Certainly. Every minister in this front row would like to have more money, you know, because we all get committed to our programs and platforms and like to have more money. So what we're doing is reallocating within the budget to areas that we see are important.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, again. I would like to focus on one particular area of the province for a set of questions if I may, and I'm sure there are some provisions in the budget that would address these, and certainly there would be a strategy. That area is west of Edmonton, the Wabamun Lake area, where there's so much power generation. I'm not quite sure why in my constituency, in Edmonton-Riverview, but I do get contacted from time to time. There are in fact a number of cottage owners that live in my constituency who have cottages there, and it's of course people from Edmonton driving to Jasper or wherever out to the west who see that so much. I've also paid some attention to the electricity issue, and I'm concerned about how that's playing out. There seemed to be a convergence of issues in that part of the province as a result of the power plants, and they represent a whole host of issues for the environment: air, water, land. I just want to confirm an understanding I had from an earlier exchange.

The Wabamun power plant is one of the oldest coal-fired plants in the province. The original Wabamun plant still churns away. If I understood correctly, your personal view would be that when that comes up for relicensing – and I'm not going to abuse you with this question or anything, but I'm just curious – they would be expected in that power plant to meet today's standards for emissions, and of course you're not . . . [interjection] Okay. I'll stop there and let you fill me in on that.

DR. TAYLOR: Essentially yes.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. minister.

DR. TAYLOR: Thank you. I'm so excited I don't even wait for it. What we've done is we've asked the Clean Air Strategic Alliance to look at new emission standards for it. Are you familiar with the Clean Air Strategic Alliance?

DR. TAFT: Well, a little bit.

DR. TAYLOR: Okay. It's basically made of – I could mention names, but you would know. Environmental groups are on there and industry and a couple of government representatives. So what I've asked them to do is to take a look at tightening up, developing more stringent standards for us, for Alberta. Okay? Now, once the Clean Air Strategic Alliance gives us those standards and I take it through the political process and it becomes government policy, then my position would be that any licence that comes up after we have those standards should not be grandfathered. It should have to meet those new standards that are being developed by the Clean Air Strategic Alliance.

I do have a couple of these. Somebody has kindly sent me down a couple of my place mats, so I'll ask the page to take one over to each member, please.

DR. TAFT: What's the time frame for that? Realistically, if things go your way – and that's an if, I understand – when might the old power plants face an expectation to upgrade their emissions?

DR. TAYLOR: I'm expecting to have something back from CASA within about 18 months. I see people nodding up there. And then how long does it take to get them through the process? Six months? I don't know. But within two years I believe we'll have some more stringent standards. So within two years is kind of the time frame that I'm expecting.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another issue out at the lake, which I think should concern us all, is not just the level of the lake – I am sure you're aware of that issue – but a concern of contamination of the water of the lake around the discharge outlet from the old power plant or indeed from the newer power plant, Sundance. There is some concern that I've had that there may be for example in the mud that's accumulated there over the years a concentration of heavy metals or other toxic contaminants. Does the department have a serious active monitoring of the water and of the mud at the bottom of the lake around that outlet or outlets like that?

DR. TAYLOR: Not to cloud the issue, but it's my understanding that – well, the lake level is one issue. We have a signed agreement with TransAlta and EPCOR, I believe, that will bring the lake level back up to the appropriate level, whatever that level is – I can't remember the numbers – over the next year to two years.

In regards to the water that comes through and back into the lake – if I'm wrong, we'll get back to you; I'm going by recollection and memory here – it's my understanding that it's treated before it gets back into the lake, that there is a water treatment plant there that treats the water before it gets back into the lake. So there shouldn't be any of the contaminants you're talking about, but I will check on that, and we'll get back to you. I'm pretty sure there's a treatment plant there, and I will get back to you and have some kind of response for you on: does the treatment plant take out the heavy metals, are there heavy metals, and how do we monitor that? I will respond to you on that.

DR. TAFT: I'm particularly referring to the oldest power plant, the old Wabamun power plant.

DR. TAYLOR: We'll check on that and get back to you.

DR. TAFT: Another issue that's brought to my attention by constituents is concern over the eastern slopes area around Waterton and the potential for that gorgeous land leading up to Waterton park to be developed. I'm sure you've heard of this issue. I'm not sure if it's in your jurisdiction entirely or not. [interjection] It's not, so I've missed my chance for that question. All right.

Changing gears to questions of habitat protection for wildlife. [interjection] Okay, not your jurisdiction either.

How about changing gears once again to air emissions from pulp plants? I'm not sure what the strategies are in your business plan specific to some pulp mills, and I'm thinking of experiences I've had driving back and forth to Jasper, going through Hinton. If the hon. member representing that town were here, he'd be thumping his desk, I'm sure. Sometimes you pass through the town and there's no smell from the plant, yet other times, including, I think, just a couple months ago, passing through that town, there remains at times quite a strong sulphurous odour from the pulp plant there. What's the strategy with pulp mill emissions, and how are we going to see that enacted through your business plan?

4:30

DR. TAYLOR: Well, what we're concerned about with emissions are things that are damaging to either human or environmental health, and I'm not sure that smell is always an indicator of that. It may be. What we do is have stationary monitors around a number of different pulp plants in this province. As well, we have a bus – my staff hates me calling it that – that goes out, and if there's a complaint from a citizen, we can send our sniffer bus out and, once again, monitor. With our stationary monitoring techniques I can tell you how many days a particular plant has been outside their limits. Okay? See, when a plant is given a licence, it's given a certain emission quality or certain emission standards that it has to meet. With our monitors we can tell you if those plants meet those standards every day, how many days of the year they were outside those standards, were inside the standards. I don't have that information right here, but I'll make a commitment to provide that kind of technical information to you from some of our monitoring stations around some of these plants.

We did have an issue with one of the plants. I can't remember if it was the Weyerhaeuser plant. I shouldn't mention company names, I guess, because I can't remember which one it was. When we actually investigated it, they were concerned about the particulate matter, and they were blaming the plant for the particulate matter. But when we actually investigated, most of the particulate – there are a lot of gravel roads around there in that particular community – was coming from the gravel roads. We will provide you with that information that we have.

DR. TAFT: Just a brief follow-up. As a general direction with those emissions from pulp mills, are there standards set now for quite a number of years, or are we going to be seeing those standards reviewed and improved or not? Do you know?

DR. TAYLOR: We're always reviewing our standards. The pulp mills and the lumber mills here in Alberta are using the latest technology. That's one area that is actually being very good environmental stewards and using the latest technology. As we go forward, we certainly are reviewing our standards all of the time in terms of where we are, where we should be, looking at other jurisdictions, where are other jurisdictions, are we tough enough, you know, are we too tough. I've never seen us say that we've been too tough, but certainly we review our standards constantly, and we will continue to review our standards. Around pulp mills, around electricity, around everything that we do, we review standards.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one or two other questions. I have a sense that the next question I have – I asked it to your colleague the minister for sustainable development, and I'm not sure you'll have any further comment on it. It has to do with the North Saskatchewan River, the health of that river. I've heard talk of a North Saskatchewan River strategy, I think, or something like that. The river flows through my constituency, and I've lived within a mile of that river almost my whole life. First of all, am I asking the right minister? Okay. I'd be interested to know where that's going and what the strategy is. In particular, I'm curious. This may be straying out of your responsibility, but the riverbed and the riverbanks and so on, the health of those or their ability to sustain or rejuvenate the sturgeon population that used to exist in the river and is dying out – I would be interested in any comments on that.

DR. TAYLOR: I'll give you a model. We actually have a very good model in this province. It's the Bow River Basin Council. That Bow River Basin Council started a number of years ago, and they've developed a model around the Bow River. I've seen the first draft of a South Saskatchewan River basin plan, which includes the Bow and would include the Oldman, the Red Deer River, the Battle River, the Belly River – I can't remember all the rivers – a number of different rivers. We're trying to use that Bow River Basin Council as a very good example. We partnered. We provided a good deal of funding for them. Once again, it's a partnership. It's put out to the community on the basin council: municipalities, environmental groups, industry. What they've done is developed a basin management plan for the Bow River in particular, and that includes the riparian environment that you're talking about, the riverbanks and so on. What we're doing is encouraging other basin management groups to take a look at that and develop basin management plans for their rivers.

The South Saskatchewan is further ahead than the North Saskatchewan, but there is an active working group that is developing, that we have funded to some extent. I'm not sure of the exact dollars, but we've put some money in to develop a North Saskatchewan River basin study. The people are working on it. It's not as far along as some of the others, but this is all part of what we see as the value of a water strategy. In the overall water strategy ultimately what we should have is a basin management plan for all the rivers in Alberta. Does that mean it's going to happen tomorrow? No. It's like our integrated resource management plans. We've sent you copies of the northeast slopes management plan, and that's what we'd like to see over all the areas of the province. That's the same kind of model that we'd like to see for the river plans, for the basins. So, yeah, there is a plan being developed. Is it as far along as I'd like to see it? No. Is it as far along as you'd like to see? But people are working, and we will get there.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question, again hopping around. I'm impressed with the minister's range of knowledge. Well done.

The last question has to do with the city of Edmonton's Waste Management Centre in the east end of the city around the old Clover Bar landfill and the quite remarkable development that's occurred around there with the composting centre and the recycling and so on and the city's ambition for this to become a waste management centre of excellence and indeed become – it seems a bit paradoxical – an international attraction for people wanting to study waste

management. So it becomes in its own way a kind of a tourist attraction. Does your department have a direct role in supporting that sort of development, and is it something that your department can encourage to develop, say, in Calgary or other areas?

DR. TAYLOR: Certainly Edmonton is seen as a model. Early on we did have some immediate involvement in that project, but the project is being run very effectively now. We certainly do encourage people to look at it. We actually have a business group in our budget that's called action on waste. It's funded, I think, up close to a million dollars. Once again, what its role is to take a look at projects like this and work with other partnerships out there and encourage essentially the recycling of various products, which we don't do enough.

A good example is the milk jug recycling. I don't think you were in when I commented on it. I'll be brief. One of my colleagues was complaining the other morning. They heard me at 5:30 in the morning, when their alarm clock went off, encouraging people to recycle milk jugs. Right now we're only doing about 42 percent. We've got a very active program with the Dairy Council. I've said to the Dairy Council: I want 55 percent at the end of this year, 65 and 75 percent recycling. They're trying to do that on a volunteer basis. So the action on waste is a very active program working with communities around the province.

Now, the big centres tend to be fairly active in this. Where it becomes more difficult is in rural Alberta. I don't know if you're familiar with this, but in many of these there might be one dump – dump is the wrong word. I actually mean a dump where you drive up and you drive to a container, you drop it in, and it dumps down into a container below. In rural Alberta it's more difficult because: who's going to pick up the recyclables and so on? So I really feel that we need to work hard in developing appropriate programs for rural Alberta in terms of the recycling areas that we're dealing with.

4:40

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to re-enter the debate on Environment. I have a bit of a follow-up question to what I talked about previously on sustainability. I'm referring to an excerpt from *Commonwealth Currents*, the 2001 edition. It's a magazine that we all get. On page 23 there was an article about what environment ministers recommend. It talks about the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment recommending to the high-level group that is reviewing the future role of the Commonwealth that it "identify environment and sustainable development as an important element of that role." This is in reference to the seventh meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in February of 2001.

The group, that was comprised of Commonwealth environmental ministers and senior officials, also suggested that

Commonwealth leaders at their October 2001 summit in Brisbane, Australia, should "explicitly acknowledge" the importance of the association's role in relation to the environment and sustainable development by placing the issue high on their agenda for discussion.

They go on to talk about how that played out.

Ministers [ultimately] called for the World Summit to promote sustainable development in a truly integrated way, through a clear commitment to poverty alleviation, and by ensuring that development and environment objectives were tackled together.

I would like the minister to comment on the substance of that. Are you able to attend these summits? I know that they're primarily a federal jurisdiction, but is there any opportunity for you to participate, and if so, do you?

DR. TAYLOR: I don't disagree with what you're saying, you know. I want to be very clear: we are very interested in this province in environmental sustainability and developing environmentally sustainable industries. For instance, we have the biggest wind generation industry in the country in this province. You can see the results in Calgary, where we fund Climate Change. Climate Change was involved with the city of Calgary in the Ride the Wind! project. That's where the whole C-Train in Calgary has been run on wind power. We worked with the city of Calgary in terms of providing green energy. In Calgary at the present time, if you want to pay an up-charge on your electricity bill, you can go with green energy. So we are very, very supportive of these projects. We will continue to find and develop other ways that we can support environmentally sustainable industry. I just want to be very clear on that.

With regards to going to the summits, I've been able to attend the summits that I felt were important for us to attend. I was at Bonn last summer, and then we've had a number of various meetings around the province. I'm not a great traveler – I prefer to stay home – so I kind of pick and choose and try to determine the ones that are worth while. If the minister of intergovernmental relations agrees to it, I'm hoping we'll be able to attend the South African summit, which is at the end of August, and it's a Rio plus 10 kind of summit, which is an environment summit that's going to be talking about Kyoto and issues around Kyoto. Yes, I have had no problem attending the summits that I feel are important for us to attend.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you. Mr. Minister, I'm quite happy to hear you say that, and I would add my push to the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations to allow the Environment minister to go, because I think there's lots to be learned and some benefits from that. I'm sure you can find the dollars in your budget. It's not that big a deal.

I would like to focus now on some of the actual line items in the budget if I may, first of all addressing the new budget for new processes, that you talked about in your opening comments. We see a change in how the ministry is delivered and program reorganization, and for us it's very tough to follow where the specific decreases have been in specific areas. You talked about a couple of the large ones, but if we could have more detailed information on that in terms of how they relate to previous years' budgets, that would be very helpful for us.

Particularly, I would like to ask about the environmental protection emergencies. We know that that area has been reduced, so if you could tell us what types of services are funded under that program and why the decrease. Have there been fewer emergencies? Do you anticipate fewer emergencies? Does this department charge back any of the costs if it can be determined that specific businesses were responsible for emergencies?

DR. TAYLOR: The question is in *Hansard*, and I'll have the department respond on that kind of specific detail.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I've been listening with interest to some of the questions I've heard directed to the Minister of Environment this afternoon. However, one of the things that concerns us all is the intricate relationships that occur between one government department and another. Yesterday in Energy estimates we heard the hon. minister discuss at length and with a degree of certainty that there was certainly too much regula-

tion and that it was affecting how business operates in this province, particularly the oil and gas business. For the Minister of Environment: how does the department deal with the event of a fire at a jointly approved EUB/Alberta Environment facility? Who determines which organization should be the primary contact? In the event that Alberta Environment is the primary contact, is there a certain step that would take place to notify the EUB? In the reverse, if the EUB is the primary contact, how does the Alberta Environment department become aware of this?

There are a number of industry notification requirements that are joint, and whether it's a facility or whether it's a pipeline, Mr. Chairman, I think we need to have this clarified in light of some incidents that have happened recently. One of those incidents that comes to mind is certainly the ethane fire at the storage facility in Fort Saskatchewan, that was operated by BP Canada. Now, there are some spills or releases or accumulative releases that the EUB would be the primary contact for. That would be like unrefined product spills. It could be produced water or refined product spills. That would be Alberta Energy; that would be the hon. minister's department. Then you have, of course, contravention of Alberta Environment approvals, and naturally that would be the hon. minister's department. But then we see unplanned or planned releases in accordance with EUB approvals; naturally they would go to the EUB. For flaring, whether it's solution gas or produced gas, it varies as to whether it's Alberta Environment or the EUB. It doesn't seem to be clear here. It could be black smoke. It could be odours or fugitive emissions. If the minister could clarify that and express confidence or nonconfidence in this system, I would be grateful.

4:50

I also at this time, Mr. Chairman, have a question regarding coal technologies. Certainly the minister – and I appreciated that – earlier discussed the fact that there is a joint study. I think it's an excellent use of taxpayers' dollars, in this member's view, to study how coal can be burned much more efficiently than it currently is, and I understand that this is going on in New Mexico. If the hon. minister could update this side of the House on precisely how much money we're spending and when there will be any interim results on this study from Los Alamos, I would appreciate that.

Also on the whole issue of coal, we know that there's certainly going to be more coal-fired electricity generation west of the city. Both TransAlta and EPCOR have facilities that, when they're built, are jointly going to produce over 1,200 megawatts of electricity for the provincial electricity grid. I'm not sure from the research I've done that even our new standards are on par with what the Americans have. Now, it doesn't matter which part of America you're in, because it is my understanding that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has a say in this matter. They have been encouraging older plants through the use of tax credits up to a cap – it's a significant cap; I could stand corrected on this, but it's in the millions of dollars – to refurbish or refit these plants with either natural gas or with coal so that they have a reduction in their emissions.

If the minister could clarify, please, what studies he's referring to when the conclusion is made that our new standards are better than those that are currently in application for American coal-fired generators. I think we have to be very cautious here that this province does not become the fly ash capital of North America, because we certainly have a lot of coal. The hon. minister said that in 15 years we may be beyond that and that what CO<sub>2</sub> there is will be used in enhanced oil recovery. In my view, that research that's going on around Estevan, Saskatchewan, is prudent. In the meantime, if people are going to build these coal-fired plants which cost millions and millions of dollars, they're going to want to know what

the rules are before they put their money down for the construction costs and the purchase of turbines or whatever. And the public deserves to know, because once these plants are built, they're going to be operating for 30, perhaps 35 years. All the constituents of Drayton Valley-Calmar, all the constituents in Ponoka and Lacombe that are sort of downwind of these facilities, we should not expect them to have particulates or fly ash or soot or an emission of any sort floating down on them continuously for the next two generations. I don't think that is prudent planning.

Now water transfer. The hon. minister is certainly industrious and hardworking. He's always at the job, I believe, and he's as industrious as the Canadian beaver that's on the nickel. And there's a similarity there, Mr. Chairman, because he seems to want to build dams, whether they're needed or not. This gets to the whole issue that I have regarding water. I would like to know if water is considered by this department and this minister to be a commodity that can be bought and sold. I think this is very, very important, because long after we've all left this Assembly, the members that are coming after us are going to be discussing this issue. I would like to know what exactly is going on. Is water considered a commodity, or is it for the public good, for everyone? There are issues. There's a lot of water in the north half of the province and there's a lot less in the south half of the province. How exactly are we going to deal with this issue?

There are members here that have problems with this issue of global warming. As I said after the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Chairman, there was certainly reluctance to spend public money, significant public money. We saw it in the teachers' dispute. It is this member's view that that money is being set aside because of the possibility of large payments for drought-stricken farmers this summer. Now, the money certainly has to come from somewhere.

When you think of the dramatic climate changes that are occurring, we have to be concerned about this. One only has to drive on the Banff-Jasper highway and see the recession of the glaciers. You can walk up to one signpost that states 1930 or 1935, and you've almost got to walk a kilometre before you can get up to the current time. That's how much the glacier has receded. Certainly in the Arctic there are dramatic, quick changes that are occurring with the ice packs and the weather in the Arctic.

It is time for us to consider our activities, our industrial activities and the activities related to our larger concentrations of people in cities. We have to consider this, and that's where the whole issue of water, global warming, and greenhouse gases comes into public debate.

Now, also the issue of gas flaring. I'm sure the Environment ministry is in discussions with the Minister of Finance, perhaps deciding if there can be some form of tax relief to encourage not only electricity produced by wind power, which I think southern Alberta could certainly be a world leader at, but also with capturing gases that are flared. It's unfortunate. You can take the statistics here this afternoon with me. Certainly less than 1 percent of gas production in this province, from the statistics I'm looking at, is flared. It could be roughly 1 percent. It might be 2 percent, Mr. Chairman.

If we could use that gas to power turbines to produce electricity for the local area – and this would certainly also apply to solution gas. I think it would be noteworthy at least to study. The hon. minister said that we're studying coal technologies, but this is something that is worth studying as well in consultation to spark the industry the same as the oil and gas industry was – I'll use the word again – sparked in the early '90s with the Alberta royalty tax credit. We saw a turnaround and a lot of interest by the oil and gas industry operating in Alberta as a result of that tax incentive, and that was a tax incentive that really came into play in 1994.

So what sort of plans has this government got and this minister got



to encourage further development of wind power and also the capture of gas that would be flared and could be used to power turbines to generate electricity? What's being done with those policy issues?

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will cede the floor to another colleague at this time. Thank you.

5:00

DR. TAYLOR: Just a couple of comments. In regard to jurisdiction between the EUB and the Department of Environment I suggest that the member read the legislation and understand the legislation. It'll probably inform him of what he wants to know. In regard to some of his other comments around coal I suggest that he review Edmonton-Riverview's rather intelligent comments and questions and review the rather intelligent answers that he got. I think that'll answer most of his questions.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the minister and his department for their participation in the debate this afternoon and, previous to the last comments, his quite interesting and well-thought-out comments. Looks like he's getting a little testy and maybe a little tired, so perhaps it's time to call an end to this particular day.

We do have number of other questions. Most of them are fairly detailed in terms of subject matter, and we will send them over in writing to the department.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Member for Calgary-Montrose for finally entering into debate in this legislative session by repeatedly calling for the question, and I would also ask for the question at this time.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: After considering the business plan and proposed estimates for the Department of Environment, are you ready for the vote?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Agreed to:

Operating Expense and Capital Investment	\$103,450,000
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THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Shall the vote be reported? Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. There being no further speakers, I would move that we rise and report our progress to the House.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

MR. MASKELL: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

Resolved that a sum not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, for the following department.

Environment: operating expense and capital investment, \$103,450,000.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a very good week, a very good afternoon, and because of the extremely good progress made over the week, I would move that we now call it 5:30 and that we adjourn until 1:30 p.m. next Monday.

[Motion carried; at 5:05 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

